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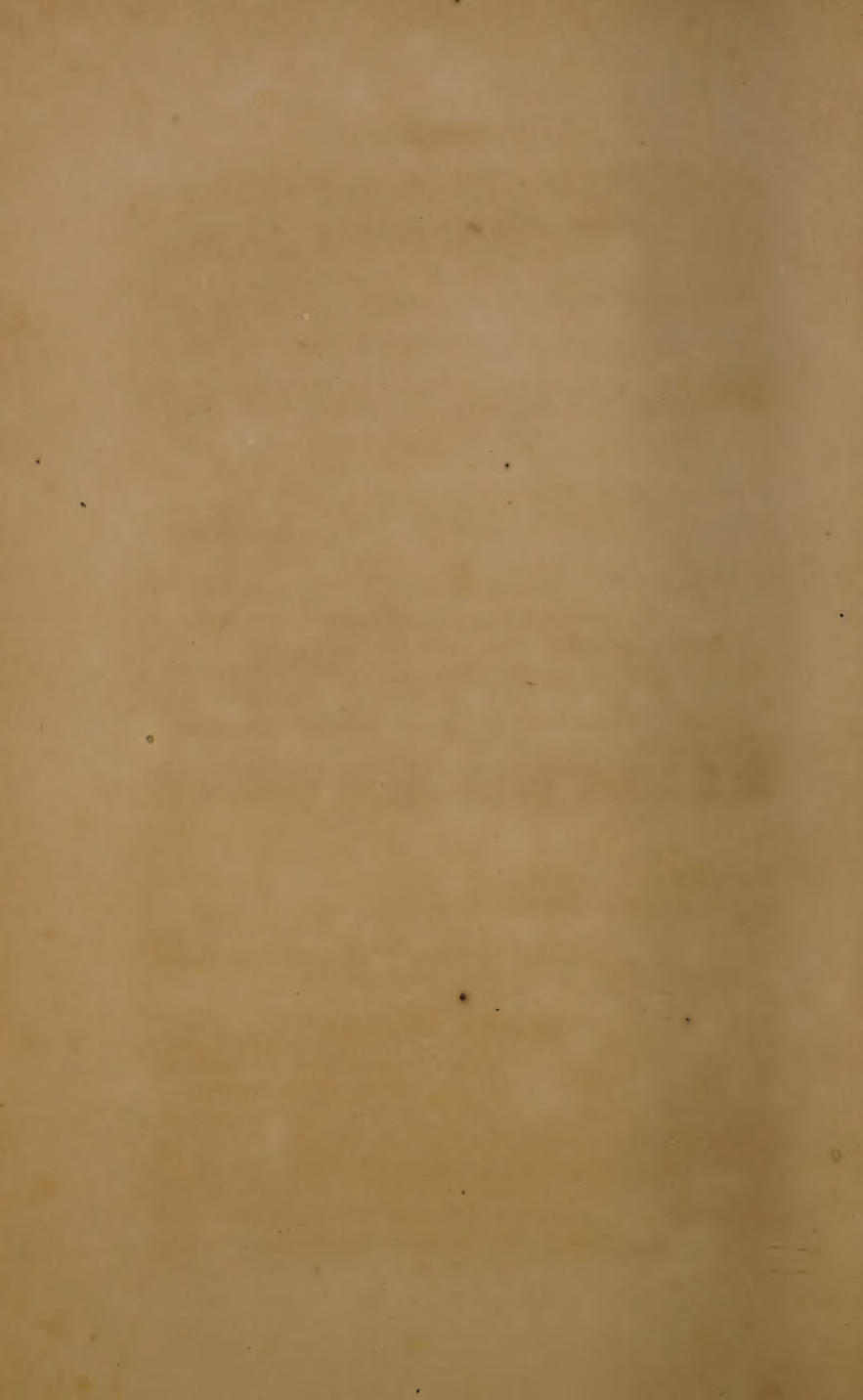
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THE  
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 OF  
 RELIGIOUS IDEAS,  
 Through Successive Ages.

BY  
 L. MARIA CHILD.

God sends his teachers unto every age,  
 To every clime, and every race of men,  
 With revelations fitted to their growth  
 And One of mind, nor gives the realm of TRUTH  
 Into the selfish rule of one sole race:  
 Therefore, each form of worship that hath swayed  
 The life of man, and given it to grasp  
 The master-key of knowledge, REVERENCE,  
 Enfold some germs of goodness and of right.

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## P R E F A C E.

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I WOULD candidly advise persons who are conscious of bigoted attachment to any creed, or theory, not to purchase this book. Whether they are bigoted Christians, or bigoted infidels, its tone will be likely to displease them.

My motive in writing has been a very simple one. I wished to show that *theology* is not *religion*; with the hope that I might help to break down partition walls; to ameliorate what the eloquent Bushnell calls "baptized hatreds of the human race." In order to do this, I have endeavoured to give a concise and comprehensive account of religions, in the liberal spirit of the motto on my title page. The period embraced in my plan extends from the most ancient Hindoo records, to the complete establishment of the Catholic church.

While my mind was yet in its youth, I was offended by the manner in which Christian writers usually describe other religions; for I observed that they habitually covered apparent contradictions and absurdities, in Jewish or Christian writings, with a veil of allegories and mystical interpretation, while the records of all other religions were unscrupulously analyzed, or contemptuously described as "childish fables," or "filthy superstitions." I was well aware that this was done unconsciously, under the influence of habitual reverence for early teaching; and I was still more displeased with the scoffing tone of sceptical writers, who regarded all religions as founded on imposture. Either way, the one-sidedness of the representation troubled my strong sense of justice. I recollect wishing, long ago, that I could become acquainted with some good, intelligent Bramin, or Mohammedan, that I might learn, in some degree, how their religions appeared to *them*. This feeling expanded within me, until it took form in this book. The facts it contains are very old; the novelty it claims is the point of view from which those facts are seen and presented. I

have treated all religions with reverence, and shown no more favour to one than to another. I have exhibited each one in the light of its own Sacred Books ; and in giving quotations, I have aimed in every case to present impartially the beauties and the blemishes. I have honestly tried never to exaggerate merits, or conceal defects. I have not declared that any system was true, or that any one was false. I have even avoided the use of the word heathen ; for though harmless in its original signification, it is used in a way that implies condescension, or contempt ; and such a tone is inconsistent with the perfect impartiality I have wished to observe. I have tried to place each form of worship in its own light ; that is, as it appeared to those who sincerely believed it to be of divine origin. But even this candid method must necessarily produce a very imperfect picture, drawn as it is by a modern mind, so foreign to ancient habits of thought, and separated from them by the lapse of ages. The process has been exceedingly interesting ; for the history of the religious sentiment, struggling through theological mazes, furnishes the most curious chapter in the strange history of mankind.

I offer the results of my investigations with extreme timidity. Not because I am afraid of public opinion ; for I have learned to place exceedingly little value on anything the world can give, or take away. But I have been oppressed with anxiety, lest I should not perform the important task I had undertaken in the right spirit and the most judicious manner. I have conscientiously tried to do it with great care, fearless truthfulness, perfect candour, reverence toward God, and tenderness for human nature. I have sought out facts diligently, and stated them plainly ; leaving the reader to draw his own conclusions freely, uninfluenced by suggestions from me. The inferences deduced from my statements will vary according to the predominance of the reverential, or the rationalistic element in character. I have contented myself with patiently digging out information from books old and new, and presenting it with all the clearness and all the honesty of which I am capable. To write with the unbiassed justice at which I aimed, I was obliged to trample under my feet the theological underbrush, which always tangles and obstructs the path, when the soul strives to be guided only by the mild bright star of religious sentiment. It is never pleasant to walk directly through and over the opinions of the age in which one lives. I have not done it sarcastically, as if I despised them ; because such is not my feeling. I have done it in a straight-forward quiet way, as if I were unconscious of their existence. I foresee that many good and conscientious people will consider it a great risk to treat religious history in this manner. If I

could have avoided giving them pain, and at the same time have written with complete impartiality, I would most gladly have done so. For myself, I have firm faith that plain statements of truth can never eventually prove injurious, on *any* subject.

Milton has expressed this conviction with rare eloquence: "Though all the winds of doctrine be let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously to doubt her strength. Let her and falsehood grapple. Who ever knew Truth put to the worse by a free and open encounter? Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks. Methinks I see her as an eagle muing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full mid-day beam; purging and unscaling her long abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous flocking birds, with those also who love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms. What would ye do then? Should ye suppress all this flowery crop of knowledge, sprung up, and yet daily springing up? Should ye set an oligarchy of twenty engrossers over it, to bring a famine upon our minds again, when we shall know nothing but what is measured to us by *their* bushel? Believe it, they who counsel you to such suppressing, do as good as bid you to suppress yourselves."

If scholars should read this book, they may perchance smile at its extreme simplicity of style. But I have written for the popular mind, not for the learned. I have therefore aimed principally at conciseness and clearness. I have recorded dates, and explained phrases, supposed to be generally understood, because I know there are many intelligent readers not familiar with such dates and phrases, and who cannot conveniently refer to cyclopedias, or lexicons. I am aware of having inserted very many things, which are perfectly well known to everybody. But this was unavoidable, in order to present a continuous whole, from the same point of view. Doubtless, a learned person could have performed the task far better, in many respects; but on some accounts, my want of learning is an advantage. Thoughts do not range so freely, when the store-room of the brain is overloaded with furniture. In the course of my investigations, I have frequently observed that a great amount of erudition becomes a veil of thick clouds between the subject and the reader. Moreover, learned men can rarely have such freedom from any sectarian bias, as the circumstances of my life have produced in me.

It is now more than eight years since I first began this task. Had I

foreseen how far my little boat would carry me out to sea, I certainly should not have undertaken the voyage. Unexpected impediments interrupted the labour during three years; but even then my thoughts and my reading were continually directed toward it. I have been diligent and patient in procuring and comparing facts, from sources deemed perfectly authentic, and I have been scrupulously conscientious in the statement of them. I may have made mistakes; for it is not easy to arrive at the exact truth amid a mass of obscure and often contradictory statements. But I have done my best; and if there are errors, they have not proceeded from intention, or from carelessness. I have not asked any person *what* I should say, or *how* I should say it. My natural love of freedom resisted such procedure; and foreseeing that I might incur unpopularity, I was unwilling to implicate others. I have, therefore, merely stated to learned men, and women, that I wished for information on specified subjects, and inquired of them what were the best books to be consulted. I have sometimes condensed quotations, for the sake of brevity, but I have never misquoted, or misrepresented.

I am not aware that any one, who truly revered the spirit of Christianity, has ever before tried the experiment of placing it precisely on a level with other religions, so far as the manner of representation is concerned. Even wise and candid men, more or less unconsciously, adopt a system of withholding evidence on one side, and accumulating it on the other; as the most honest lawyers do, when pleading a cause. The followers of all religions practise self-deception of this kind. They forget that most human beings would seem great and holy, in comparison with others, if all the weaknesses were carefully concealed on one side, and protruded into prominence on the other; if all the excellences were rendered conspicuous on one side, and kept out of sight on the other. I have tried to avoid this tendency. I have given beautiful extracts from Platonic philosophers, and from Christian Fathers. I have portrayed the benevolence of bishops, without veiling their ambition, or intolerance. I have not eulogized any doctrines as true, or stigmatized any as false. I have simply said so it was argued, and thus it was decided. I knew of no other method by which complete impartiality could be attained.

Some may consider the sketches of Apollonius, Philo, Cerinthus, Plotinus, and others, as irrelevant to the history of Christianity. But in order to trace the progress of religious ideas, it was necessary to describe the prominent characters, and external influences, which modified their growth; for the surrounding spiritual atmosphere affects the formation of all opinions. I have therefore endeavoured to show what



degree of preparation there was, in the Jewish and Gentile world, for the coming of Christianity, and then what kind of resistance it met, internally and externally. I may have misunderstood some theological statements; for it is not easy to draw a continuous thread from the tangled skein of polemical controversy; which constantly reminds me of the Scotch definition of metaphysics: "It is ane mon expleeing to anither what he dinna weel understand himsel."

The perfect openness with which I have revealed many particulars generally kept in the back ground, will trouble some devotional people, whose feelings I would not willingly wound. But I place great reliance on sincerity, and have strong faith in the power of genuine Christianity to stand on its own internal merits, unaided by concealment. My own mind has long been desirous to ascertain the plain unvarnished truth on all these subjects; and having sought it out, I felt prompted to impart it to those who were in a similar state. Those who wish to obtain candid information, without caring whether it does, or does not, sustain any favourite theory of their own, may perhaps thank me for saving them the trouble of searching through large and learned volumes for scattered items of information; and if they complain of want of profoundness, they may perchance be willing to accept simplicity and clearness in exchange for depth. In order to do justice to the book, if read at all, it ought not to be glanced at here and there, but read carefully from the beginning to the end; because the links of a continuous chain are preserved throughout.

Constant reference to authorities would have loaded the pages with notes, and unpleasantly interrupted the reading. I have therefore given, at the end of the volume, a list of the principal books I have used, which can be examined by any one who doubts the accuracy of my statements.

Sustained by conscious integrity of purpose, and having executed my task faithfully, according to the best of my ability, I quietly leave the book to its fate, whether it be neglect, censure, or praise.



# PROGRESS

OF

## RELIGIOUS IDEAS.



### HINDOSTAN, OR INDIA.

"The countries of the far East had also their age of glory. At their fire was lighted a torch, which passing from the hands of Egyptians to the hands of Jews, and from the hands of Jews to the hands of Christians, still casts its gleams upon the earth."

THE name of this country was derived from one of its principal rivers. Stan signifies land; hence it came to be called Indus-Stan, land of the Indus. Hindoos themselves called it by a name signifying "The Central Land;" sometimes it was designated as "The Land of Righteousness." Within the last century their literature has attracted much attention, and the careful investigations of Oriental scholars prove them to have been a civilized people at a period extremely remote. In times coeval with the earliest authentic records, they could calculate eclipses, and were venerated for their attainments in several arts and sciences. Some of their very ancient buildings contain the twelve signs of the zodiac, represented by almost precisely the same emblems now in use among us. According to the learned astronomer, M. Bailly, their observations of the heavenly

bodies may be dated as far back as four thousand nine hundred and fifty years. The Sanscrit language, in which their Sacred Books are written, is of such remote antiquity, that no tradition remains of any people by whom it was originally spoken; and their mythological sculptures, covering immense masses of rock, are said to be "works which make the pyramids of Egypt seem young."

The Hindoos believed themselves to have been the first inhabitants of this earth; and their traditions place the creation of the world many millions of years farther back than we do. First, there was an age of purity, called the Satya Yug, when men lived to an immense age, and were more than thirty feet high. They were too innocent to have need of government, and so unselfish that all the goods of life were equally distributed.

"Delightful times! because  
Nature then reigned, and Nature's laws;  
And this grand truth from none was hidden,  
What pleaseth hath no law forbidden."

A great Deluge swept away all the memorials of this age. In the second age, called Treta Yug, men began to be vicious. The term of their existence was much shortened, and Brahma gave them rajahs, or princes, to rule over them. In the third age, called the Dwapar Yug, vice and virtue became equally mingled, and the lives of men were again shortened one third. The fourth age, called the Cali Yug, though much shorter than the others in duration, is to embrace a term of four hundred and thirty-two thousand years. According to their Sacred Books, it commenced about five thousand years ago, when there was a remarkable conjunction of the planets. In this age, the longest term of man's life is limited to one hundred years, and his stature, already greatly diminished, will be gradually reduced to pigmy size. Wickedness will more and more abound till the end comes.

Hindoos have no history to sustain these dates, comprising such enormous intervals of time. Lists of kings,



preserved in various parts of the country, have been calculated to go back between four and five thousand years.

It is a recognized fact that some individuals have temperaments more inclined than others to veneration and mysticism ; and the remark is equally applicable to nations. The Hindoos are peculiarly ardent and susceptible, and as usual with such organizations, they have strong devotional tendencies. We find their wise men of ancient time neglecting historical records, and paying comparatively slight attention to the external sciences, but meditating earnestly, in the loneliness of stately forests, on the origin and destiny of the human soul. Ecstatic delight in nature, exuberant wealth of imagination, a pervading reverence for the supernatural, characterize every department of their literature. The same religious impress is on their history. They have been patient and docile under every foreign yoke, so long as they were unmolested in usages deemed sacred ; but the moment there was any interference with devotional practices, they were roused at once, and defended them with the ferocity of tigers.

The first question which perplexed the old sages of India, standing as they did on the threshold of time, was one which no subtilty of human intellect has yet been able to solve. They asked, Whence came Evil? Conceiving, as we do, that the Great First Cause of all things *must* be good, they knew not how to account for disease and wickedness. They did not ascribe them to a Bad Spirit, almost as powerful as God himself ; but they supposed that Matter was Evil, and that the union of Spirit with Matter was the origin of all sin, sickness, and sorrow. This visible world, including mortal bodies, they regarded as mere phantasmagoria, without any reality ; a magic-lantern show, by which the Divine Mind, for inscrutable purposes, deludes us into the belief that we are independent existences, and that the things around us are real. Hence they called creation *Maya*, or Illusion.

This theological theory, acting on temperaments naturally plaintive and poetic, produced melancholy views of

life, and a strong inclination toward religious ecstasy; while at the same time warmth of climate and facility of procuring sustenance predisposed to lassitude and gentle reverie. In times ancient beyond conjecture, there were men among them who withdrew altogether from the labours and pleasures of the world, and in solitary places devoted themselves entirely to religious contemplation. This lonely existence on the silent mountains, or amid the darkness of immense forests, infested by serpents and wild beasts, and as they believed by Evil Spirits also, greatly excited popular imagination. The human soul, unsatisfied in its cage of finite limitation, is always aspiring after the good and the true, always eagerly hoping for messengers from above, and therefore prone to believe in them. Thus these saintly hermits came to be objects of extreme veneration among the people. Men travelled far to inquire of them how sins might be expiated, or diseases cured; for it was believed that in thus devoting themselves to a life beyond the tumult of the passions, occupied solely with penance and prayer, they approached very near to God, and received direct revelations of his divine wisdom.

In the beginning, these anchorites were doubtless influenced by sincere devotion, and made honest efforts to attain what seemed to them the highest standard of purity and holiness. Their mode of life was simple and austere in the extreme. They lived in caverns, or under the shelter of a few boughs, which they twisted together in the shadow of some great tree. Their furniture consisted merely of an antelope skin to sleep on, a vase to receive alms, a pitcher for water, a basket to gather roots and wild berries, a hatchet to cut wood for sacrifices, a staff to help them through the forest, and a rosary made of lotus seeds, to assist in repeating their numerous prayers. The beard and nails were suffered to grow, and to avoid trouble with their hair, it was twisted into peculiar knots, resembling the close curls of an African. In later times, they shaved their heads, probably from motives of cleanliness. However high might have been their caste in the society

of the world, they retained no ornament, or badge of distinction. They wore simply a coarse yellowish red garment made of the fibres of bark. Their food consisted of wild roots, fruit, and grain; and of these they must eat merely enough to sustain life. They might receive food as alms, or even ask for it, in cases of extreme necessity; but they must strive to attain such a state of indifference, that they felt no regret if refused, and no pleasure if they received it. They were bound to the most rigid chastity, in thought as well as deed. So far as they coveted the slightest pleasure from any of the senses, so far were they from their standard of perfect sanctity. Some made a vow of continual silence, and kept a skull before them to remind them constantly of death. Their occupations were to cut wood for sacrifices by fire; to gather roots and berries for daily food, deducting a portion to be offered on the altars; to recite prayers three times a day, morning, noon, and evening, always preceded by ablution; to repeat sacred sentences; to go through daily ceremonies for the spirits of departed ancestors; to offer sacrifices at the new moon and full moon, at morning and evening twilight.

In addition to this routine, they prescribed to themselves tasks more or less severe, according to the degree of holiness they wished to attain, or had courage to pursue. Some fasted to the very verge of dissolution. In summer they exposed themselves to the scorching sun, or surrounded themselves with fires. In winter they wore wet garments, or stood up to the chin in water. They went forth uncovered amid frightful tempests. They stood for hours and days on the point of their toes, with arms stretched upward, motionless as a tree. They sat on their heels, closing their ears tight with their thumbs, their eyes with the forefingers, their nostrils with the middle fingers, and their lips with the little fingers; in this attitude they remained holding their breath till they often fell into a swoon.

These terrible self-torments resulted from their belief that this life was merely intended for expiation; that the

body was an incumbrance, and the senses entirely evil; that relations to outward things entangled the soul in temptation and sin; that man's great object should be to withdraw himself entirely from Nature, and thus become completely absorbed in the eternal Soul of the Universe, from which his own soul originally emanated.

Penances undertaken for *sins* committed were supposed to procure no other advantage than the remission of future punishment for those sins; but sufferings *voluntarily* incurred, merely to annihilate the body, and attain nearness to the divine nature, were believed to extort miraculous gifts from supernatural beings, and ultimately enable man to become God.

Aiming at this state of perfection, they gradually attained complete indifference to all external things. They no longer experienced desire or disappointment, hope or fear, joy or sorrow. Some of them went entirely naked, and were reputed to subsist merely on water. The world was to them as though it did not exist. In this state the words they uttered were considered divine revelations. They were believed to know everything by intuition; to read the mysteries of past, present, and future; to perceive the thoughts of whoever came into their presence; to move from one place to another by simply willing to do so; to cure diseases, and even raise the dead. Some of this marvellous power was supposed to be imparted even to the garments they wore, and the staffs with which they walked. The Hindoo Sacred Writings are filled with all manner of miracles performed by these saints. There are traditions that some of them were taken up alive to heaven; and impressions on the rocks are shown, said to be footprints they left when they ascended. By extraordinary purification and suffering, some were reputed to have obtained such power, even over the gods, that they could compel them to grant whatever they asked. For this reason it was supposed the deities were not well pleased when a hermit vowed himself to remarkable efforts; and they strove to seduce him from his purpose



by all manner of temptations. Hindoo poems abound with legends of beautiful nymphs sent on such missions, and often proving successful. The holy hermit Visvamitra was so fascinated by the nymph Menaka, that five years passed in her society seemed to him but a single moment. "Alas!" exclaimed he, "what has become of my wisdom, my penitence, my firm resolution? Behold all destroyed at once by a woman! Seduced by the sin which pleased Indra, I see myself deprived of the advantages I had gained by all my austerities."

But the mission of these nymphs was a dangerous one for themselves also; for if the holy recluse did withstand their attractions, and pronounce a curse upon them, his words must inevitably take effect, however terrible they might be. Thus the nymph Rambha, striving to seduce Visvamitra, was, by the force of his imprecations, changed to a pillar of stone for a thousand years. The most powerful kings feared the malediction of these highly sanctified mortals, and sought their blessing as the greatest earthly good. One of the sacred legends thus describes the reception given to some of these celebrated anchorites, by the king of Lilipa:—"Penetrated with inexpressible joy and reverence, he bowed his face to the earth before them. Having caused them to be seated, he washed their feet, drank a portion of the water, and poured the remainder on his head. Joining his hands upon his forehead, he made a profound obeisance, and thus addressed them:—"The happiness I this day enjoy can only be in reward for some good works I have performed in a previous state of existence. I possess all desirable good in seeing your sacred feet. My body is now perfectly pure, since I have had the happiness to behold you. You are the gods whom I serve. I recognize no others but you. Henceforth, I am as pure as the waters of Ganges.'"

The site chosen for hermitages was usually in the midst of picturesque scenery, on the side of mountains commanding an extensive prospect, or amid the cool shadows of majestic groves. It was considered peculiarly desirable



to be near the meeting of two sacred rivers, for the performance of prescribed ablutions and ceremonies. A very ancient sacred poem, called *The Mahabharata*, contains the following description of a traveller in the forest approaching one of these holy places:—"The distant cry of deer, the song of birds, the hum of bees, resounded gently in his ear, and conveyed to his soul an inexpressible feeling of calm happiness. Graceful trees bent under the weight of fruits and flowers. Their flexible branches balanced themselves to the breath of the breeze, which, in passing, took from them the sweetest fragrance, and spread it through the atmosphere. On the enamelled turf, troops of Gandharvas\* and Asparas,† brilliant with youth, pursued each other in frolicksome play, gliding from space to space, as light shadows. He was bewildered with delight under the immense bowers of verdure, through which quivering rays of the sun penetrated with gentle light, and gave only warmth enough to temper the freshness of their deep shadows. Plunged in soothing reverie, his uncertain steps wandered toward a spot where all the beauties of the scene united. The river Malini rippled and played with many couples of brilliantly white swans, and on its borders he perceived a sacred grove, which he conjectured might be the retreat of some holy personage. This happy corner of the earth did in fact enclose a peaceful hermitage within its bosom."

These hermits, in obedience to the injunctions of Hindoo religion, imparted freely of all they had to men and animals. Thus their places of retreat came to be considered open asylums for the poor, and for travellers. The saints were gradually classified into different orders, bearing various names, indicating progressive degrees of sanctity; such as, "the dweller in the forest," "the man vowed to contemplation," "the man who has subdued himself," "the man who is absorbed into the Divine Soul." The

\* Musicians of the air, the Spirits of Singing Stars.

† Nymphs who dance and sing in Paradise.

more a hermit was renowned for holiness, the greater number of disciples he attracted toward him; till in many places his solitary grotto, or hut, came to be surrounded by a small village of rude huts. Younger men, who sought him for instruction, were bound to treat him with unlimited reverence, and implicitly obey all his injunctions. Thus something resembling monasteries, or theological schools, was established in the forests of Hindostan, at a very remote period of antiquity. Seven of the most ancient of these hermits, peculiarly renowned for wisdom and holiness, transmitted their privileges to descendants, and thus became the germ of seven classes in an hereditary priesthood still existing under the name of Brahmins.

There were many hermits not vowed to their ascetic vocation for life. It was common for men who had committed crimes to retire into the forest for a certain number of months, or years, and undergo painful penances, to escape future punishment for their faults, and be restored to society with renovated character. Sometimes kings, who had been dethroned by conquest, or merchants who had lost their wealth, retired from the world and performed sacrifices to regain their lost fortune. This course was respected as pious and meritorious; but it was deemed a great sin for such men to represent themselves as belonging to the class of voluntary saints. They often became so attached to their secluded life, that they were reluctant to return to the world, when the period of their vow had expired. One of them is represented as thus bidding farewell to his retreat:—"Oh, mountain, perpetual asylum of holy hermits, who have given themselves up to the meditation of virtue, and the practice of pure works! Oh, king of mountains, rich in purifying streams, adieu! I have passed happy days upon thy heights. I have nourished myself with the delicious fruits thou hast produced, and have quenched my thirst with the clear waters that flow from thy summit. Oh, mountain pure from sin! Like unto a living child happy on the breast of his father, have I enjoyed myself upon thy bosom, peopled with groups

of Nymphs, and resounding with praises of Brahma."

The most spiritual portion of the Hindoo Sacred Books teach the existence of one invisible God, whom they call Brahm. They make no images of him, and build no temples for his worship. His name is never uttered by a pious Hindoo. None of their traditions represent him as incarnated in any form; because they believe him to be entirely above human comprehension, and altogether incapable of the slightest change in his existence. Nature is the inferior, passive portion of him. "Brahm and Nature are one, as the soul and body of man are one. All things emanate from him, all is he, and all returns to him. As plants grow out of the earth and return to it again, so does everything in the universe emanate from this divine essence, subsist continually by it, and finally return to it."

This law of alternate emanation and absorption governs all things, from a musquito up to planets, and celestial Spirits. Their vast divisions of time, called Yugs, are founded on the apparent revolution of the fixed stars. Four of these Yugs, including millions of our years, form their Great Astronomical Year. When this period is completed, their Sacred Books declare that the god Siva, with ten Spirits of Dissolution, will roll a comet under the moon, set the earth on fire, and reduce it all to ashes. After a time the elements will resume their order, and the world, restored to pristine beauty, will again pass through a similar succession of Yugs. One thousand of these great cycles form only a single day in the life of Brahma, the Creator, who was the first Spirit that emanated from Brahm. At the end of this long day, he falls asleep; and then not only this earth, but all things in the universe, dissolve into their original elements. His night is of the same immense duration as his day. When he wakes up the universe is renewed, to travel through a similar course, and again arrive at universal dissolution. Thirty such days make one month of Brahma; twelve months his year; a hundred such years his age; of which they assert fifty have already elapsed. When the other half of this

destined term is completed, he himself will be again absorbed in Brahm; Matter will be totally annihilated, and the invisible Supreme Being, called Brahm, will alone exist. After another vast period there will commence a new series of emanations of gods, subordinate spirits, worlds, men, and inferior existences.

This idea of God in all things, and all things in God, is called Pantheism, from Greek words signifying God in All. When the mind is strongly impressed with this belief, and conscientiously acts upon it, the effect is great tenderness toward animals, and reverence for Nature; because the minutest form of being is regarded as a portion of Deity. Thus the Hindoo saint extends hospitality alike to friends and enemies. When he eats, he shares his food with whatever creature presents itself. He refrains from honey, from reluctance to deprive bees of their nourishment. He will not eat flesh, because he shrinks from causing the death of any animal. He avoids lighting a candle at night lest insects should be drawn into the flame; and he filters the water he drinks, lest he should incautiously swallow some creature. He will not even pluck fruit with violence, but eats only such as falls of itself, because in trees and bushes also he beholds living beings, portions of the Universal Soul.

They believe that all life, whether in essence or form, proceeds constantly from Brahm, through a variety of mediums. If any creature imagines for a moment that he has existence in himself, out of the Divinity, it is the effect of magical illusion, by which Brahma himself, for incomprehensible reasons, takes captive his senses.

The action of Brahm upon Nature, and upon human souls, is through a variety of Spirits, presiding over the planets, the elements, and all the forces of Nature. All in the scale of being are emanations from him, in successive gradations. The highest of these emanations are Brahma, the Creator, Vishnu, the Preserver, and Siva, the Destroyer, who is likewise the Reproducer of forms. Brahma is represented in poetry, and in painted sculpture,



as a golden-coloured human figure, with three heads and four arms. He is never described as assuming the form of any of the inferior orders of beings, or as living upon the earth in a visible body. His name is held in exceeding reverence, and none but the Brahmins utter it. They make daily invocations to him, and sometimes offer him a flower. No sect of worshippers bears his name, and no temples or festivals are appropriated to him. This may be because his high rank inspires awe, and seems to carry him beyond the range of human sympathies; or it may be that his work as Creator being finished, mortals do not feel the need of his interference. He is represented as inhabiting a magnificent temple, called Dheira, near the Sea of Milk, in the upper celestial regions. Thither Vishnu, and other deities, repair in emergencies, to consult his oracle; but the response becomes audible only after days of devotion and prayer. All seems to indicate that Brahma was the expression of a more spiritual idea, than the other deities.

Poets and sculptors represent Vishnu as a handsome young man of blue complexion, with four arms. One holds a shell, another a lotus blossom, another a mace, another a ring, which radiates a stream of light. He is clothed in yellow, with a jewelled crown, and a necklace of gems. When asleep, he floats on the surface of the ocean, cradled in the folds of the huge star-covered serpent Seshanaga, whose thousand heads serve him for a pillow. He has a multitude of names, and is represented in a great variety of ways. He seems much nearer to the human heart than Brahma; for his power and mercy are supposed to be constantly exerted to uphold the universe, to prevent calamity, and relieve distress. He is revered as a household god, and is invoked to avert family misfortunes, or to obtain blessings when about to occupy a new dwelling. He is believed to have been repeatedly incarnated on earth, for beneficent purposes. His beautiful wife Lacshmi on such occasions assumes a female form and accompanies him among mortals, till his mission is com-



pleted. No bloody sacrifices are offered to him, but oblations of fruit, flowers, water, clarified butter, sweetmeats, rich garments, and jewels.

Siva has a vast variety of titles, among which the most common is Maha Deva, the Great God. The sculptures represent him in many different ways; but he may always be known by certain symbols that belong to him. He is sometimes painted red, sometimes silver-coloured: seated on a tiger's skin, and clothed with an elephant's hide. Sometimes he rides on a white bull, his eyes inflamed with intoxication. Sometimes he is painted with one head, sometimes with five; always with three eyes, one in the middle of his forehead. Sometimes he is represented as half man and half woman. As the reproducer of forms, he is usually accompanied by the male Emblem of Generation. As a personification of time, the Destroyer, he is a dusky youth, with red garments, a chaplet of skulls about his neck, and a trident in his hand. Because he reproduces forms, as well as destroys them, he is often painted with the venomous serpent Cobra de Capello, emblem of death, in one hand, and a Lotus and Pomegranate, emblems of renovation, in the other.

Hindoos, accustomed to the pomp and retinue of their earthly princes, assigned a vast number of agents to superior deities. Indra, God of the Firmament, is represented as a beautiful youth, whose garment is covered with eyes, to represent the all-seeing Spirits of the Stars. He rides on a white elephant, and is armed with a thunderbolt. Three hundred and thirty-two millions of Spirits, divided into classes, of various ranks and employments, acknowledge him as their leader. Poets and painters represent Surya, God of the Sun, in a golden car, drawn by seven green horses, with the Dawn for charioteer, followed by Spirits of Singing Stars chanting his praises. There are various legends of his descending to earth in a human shape, and becoming the father of a numerous progeny. Two of his sons are always painted as Twins, said to have been born of a mare impregnated by sunbeams. The

Moon is a male deity, sometimes called Soma, but more frequently Chandra. Their most ancient sovereigns were called Surya-bans and Chandra-bans, Children of the Sun and Moon, to imply a descent nearer to the gods than that of other mortals. Genesa, God of Wisdom, is greatly revered. They never build a house, or commence any important business, without offering him flowers, or sprinkling his image with oil. They do not even write a letter, or open a book, without uttering a brief invocation to him. He is painted with an elephant's head, and is always attended by a rat, which they consider a very sagacious and prudent animal. Nareda, God of Music, who invented the vina, or Hindoo lute, is not only a musician of admirable skill, but also a wise legislator, an eloquent messenger of the gods, and renowned in arts and arms. Parvati, Goddess of Enchantments, was born of the foam of the sea. Her son Cama, God of Love, is painted riding on a parrot, attended by dancing nymphs, the foremost of whom carries his flag, a fish painted on a red ground. His bow is made of sugar-cane, his string is made of bees, and his five arrows (the senses) are each pointed with some heating plant. His wife is Reti, Goddess of Affection. Pavana is God of the Winds; Agnee of fire; Varuna of the Waters. In their state of astronomical knowledge, the luminaries named by us Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus and Saturn, were considered the seven planets. Successive days were set apart to offer sacrifices to the presiding Spirits of these orbs; each of which is supposed to have particular superintendence over the day assigned to him. Each sign of the Zodiac has its deity, with various subordinates. There are genii of the hours, and even of the minutes. Every mountain and river has its guardian Spirit. One god is the protector of soldiers, another of travellers. One is prayed to for a happy marriage, another for the preservation of health. The dark goddess Cali, wife of Siva the Destroyer, is the chosen patron of robbers and murderers.

Their most ancient Sacred Books mention but few

Spirits, and command sacrifices to be offered to each, without neglecting any. This was perhaps intended to prevent any one of them from becoming elevated above the idea of a mere symbol, or instrument, of the Supreme Being. Poets afterwards indulged in great luxuriance of imagination, and a long train of deities were added, whose adventures came to be regarded as sacred history.

Among the innumerable Intelligences emanating from Brahm in successive gradations, they believe that some fell into lower spheres, because they turned away their minds from contemplating the Supreme One. Through the intercession of Spirits, who had not fallen from their original state, this world was created as a place of probation for these wandering souls, and mortal bodies were provided for them to enter. Through this penance, if faithfully performed, they might work their way upward to the primeval condition from which they fell. But if they sinned without making due atonement for their offences, they must fall still lower in the scale of being, and thus their penance might be renewed and prolonged through indefinite ages.

A legion of Evil Spirits, called Rakshasas, had a prince named Ravana. Numerous classes of Good and Evil Spirits, called Sooras and Assooras, are represented as step-brothers in perpetual hostility, to illustrate the supposed antagonism between Spirit and Matter. Wicked Spirits are generally described as giants, and are often said to have a Great Serpent for their leader. They were continually aiming to do injury to mankind, and fought desperate battles with Indra, and his Spirits of Light. They would have taken his Paradise by storm, and subverted the whole order of the universe if Brahma had not sent Vishnu to circumvent their plans. To perform this mission successfully, he assumed various forms at different times, and was twice incarnated in a human body, and dwelt among mortals.

The wonderful and universal power of light and heat have caused the Sun to be worshipped as a visible emblem

of deity in the infancy of nearly all nations. Water, which cleanses from pollution, and performs such an important part in sustaining animal and vegetable life, is recognized as another obvious symbol of divine influence. Hence the sacred rivers, fountains, and wells, abounding in Hindostan. The Air is likewise to them a consecrated emblem. Invisible, pervading all space, and necessary to the life of all creatures, it naturally suggests the spirit of God. Nearly all languages describe the soul by some phrase similar in signification to "the *breath* of life." Brahm is sometimes called Alma, or the Breathing Soul. Regarding the air as his breath, it forms part of their religious exercises to retain it in their lungs as long as possible, as one means of prolonging contact with the Universal Soul.

Other emblems deemed sacred by Hindoos, and worshipped in their temples, have brought upon them the charge of gross indecency. But if it be true at the present time, it probably was not so in the beginning. When the world was in its infancy, people spoke and acted with more of the simplicity and directness of little children, than they do at present. In the individual child, and in the childhood of society, whatever is incomprehensible produces religious awe. As the reflective faculties develop man is solemnly impressed with the wonders of creation, in the midst of which his soul wakes up, as it were, from a dream. And what so miraculous as the advent of this conscious soul into the marvellous mechanism of a human body? If Light, with its grand revealings, and Heat making the earth fruitful with beauty, excited wonder and worship in the first inhabitants of our world, is it strange that they likewise regarded with reverence the great mystery of human Birth? Were *they* impure thus to regard it? Or are *we* impure that we do *not* so regard it? We have travelled far, and unclean have been the paths, since those old anchorites first spoke of God and the soul in the solemn depths of their forest sanctuaries. Let us not smile at their mode of tracing the



Infinite and Incomprehensible Cause throughout all the mysteries of Nature, lest by so doing we cast the shadow of our own grossness on their patriarchal simplicity.

From time immemorial, an emblem has been worshipped in Hindostan as the type of creation, or the origin of life. It is the most common symbol of Siva, and is universally connected with his worship. To understand the original intention of this custom, we should remember that Siva was not merely the reproducer of human forms; he represented the Fructifying Principle, the Generating Power that pervades the universe, producing sun, moon, stars, men, animals, and plants. The symbol to which we have alluded is always in his temples. It is usually placed in the inmost recess, or sanctuary, sculptured in granite, marble, or ivory, often crowned with flowers, and surmounted by a golden star. Lamps are kept burning before it, and on festival occasions it is illuminated by a lamp with seven branches, supposed to represent the planets. Small images of this emblem, carved in ivory, gold, or crystal, are often worn as ornaments about the neck. The pious use them in their prayers, and often have them buried with them. Devotees of Siva have it written on their foreheads in the form of a perpendicular mark. The maternal emblem is likewise a religious type, and worshippers of Vishnu represent it on their foreheads by a horizontal mark, with three short perpendicular lines.

The serious impression made on the minds of ancient devotees by the great mysteries of conception and birth, is everywhere observable in the metaphysical theories and religious ceremonies of Hindostan. They suppose that Brahm comprised within himself both the masculine and feminine principle, therefore his name is in the neuter gender. By thought he separated the two, and produced Brahma, who is often called the "First Male of the Universe." His wife is Sereswaty, Goddess of Imagination and Invention, from whom proceeded first music, then language, literature, and the arts. By her aid Brahma formed the mun-



dane egg, which produced our world. Every masculine deity has a feminine companion, through whose agency new forms of being are produced. Lacshmi, Goddess of Abundance, who presides over harvests, is mate of Vishnu, the Preserver. Siva has numerous wives, according to his various titles in the multifarious departments of destruction or change. Under the name of Iswara, he is wedded to Isa, or Isi, supposed to represent Nature, which in all languages is metaphorically called she. As changer of the seasons, and promoter of germination, he unites with Parvati, Goddess of Illusions or Enchantments. As Time, the Destroyer, his mate is the dark goddess Cali, with four hands, full of deadly weapons, a necklace of human skulls, and a girdle of slaughtered giants' hands.

There is a very striking difference in the habits of the Asiatic and European mind with regard to ideas deemed by us indelicate. Hindoo Sacred Writings abound with metaphors drawn from sexual love, to illustrate the intimate and fruitful union of God with Nature. So completely do they mingle natural and spiritual ideas on this subject, that even voluptuous scenes in their amorous poetry are often allegorical descriptions of the blessed absorption of a sanctified human soul into the Divine Soul of the Universe. Sir William Jones remarks:—"It never seems to have entered the heads of Hindoo legislators, or people, that anything natural could be offensively obscene; a singularity which pervades all their writing and conversation, but is no proof of the depravity of their morals."

Hindoo theology teaches that there exists an eternal unchangeable relation of mutual dependence between all things in the universe. The gods cannot exist without offerings from men, and men cannot subsist without gifts from the gods. Their Sacred Books declare that "the virtuous guide the sun by their truth, and sustain the earth by their holy sacrifices." Departed souls are dependent on the good offices of those who survive them; therefore it is enjoined that sacrifices be performed for the

souls of ancestors as far back as the third generation. There must be daily offerings of water, with prescribed prayers; and on the first day of every new moon more elaborate ceremonies and prayers. It is supposed that these help to abridge the term of punishment for sins committed in the body. If neglected, the desolate spirit may be left to hover about the grave of its buried form, or linger long in some inferior animal, or suffer torment in the infernal regions.

The division of society into castes is a part of their system of regular gradation and mutual dependence. They consider their own nation set apart from others, a pre-eminently pure race, to whom the laws of divine wisdom have been peculiarly intrusted. They regard other nations as barbarian, and consider it pollution to intermingle with them by marriage, or even by eating with them. Foreigners are not allowed to read their Holy Books, or approach their consecrated groves and fountains. Sir James Forbes speaks of a Mahometan who, bathing in one of their sacred pools, unconscious of prohibition, had both his hands cut off. If a member of any other nation happens to enter the hut of one of his Hindoo servants, the furniture is tossed out of doors, because it is deemed polluted by his presence. Bishop Heber says:—"We came to a shed where a man with his wife and children were cooking their supper. The man called out to us for heaven's sake not to come near them, for he was a Bramin, and our approach would oblige him to fling away his food."

Among themselves, they are divided into four great castes, and these again are subdivided into several branches. The highest are the Bramins, or priests, supposed to have issued from the mouth of Brahma, to pray, read, and instruct. The second are Cshatriyas, princes and warriors, sprung from the arms of Brahma, to fight and govern. The third are Vaisyas, from his belly and thighs, to supply the necessities of human life by agriculture and commerce. The fourth are Soodras, from his feet, to serve as

mechanics and labourers. Numerous inferior classes have sprung up from unlawful intermixtures. The lowest and most degraded of all these are the Pariahs, who now constitute about one-fifth of the population. They are obliged to bury the corpses of criminals, and are allowed to hold no property but dogs and asses. They are forbidden to enter the temples, or dwellings of any of the other castes; to eat in their presence, or even to drink from their wells. The Code of Menu says: "Let no man who regards his duty, religious or civil, hold any intercourse with them." Each caste is perpetually separated from another by the strictest prohibitions. One must never presume to perform any business or duty that has been appropriated to another. It is a disgrace and a sin to intermarry or intermingle. They are not even allowed to eat with each other. It is a heavy punishment to be degraded into a lower caste; for it involves a social stigma, banishment from family and friends, and transmission of disgrace to posterity. No degree of talent or merit can regain the position forfeited by an ancestor's fault.

The Bramins, above all others, are endowed with exclusive privileges. Religious ceremonies, public or private, can be performed only by their ministry. They offer sacrifices and prayers for themselves and for others. Every important epoch in human life, and every national emergency, require their aid. The civil law is all contained in the Sacred Books, which they alone are allowed to study and explain; consequently, they are the only lawyers and judges. All knowledge of medicine is derived from the same volumes; and sickness being considered a punishment for transgression, penances and religious ceremonies are imposed as remedies; therefore they are the only physicians. Astronomy, of which astrology forms an important portion, is also revealed in their Holy Books; hence the priests are relied upon to make astronomical calculations, and predict future events by the stars. This exclusive possession of such knowledge as exists, has, of course, been a source of perpetual emolument.

Every Hindoo priest is a Bramin; but all the Bramins are not priests. Those who expound the Sacred Books take precedence of other Bramins. The highest order of this powerful hierarchy are called Guroos. At stated seasons, these princely Pontiffs travel through their respective districts, to examine seminaries, visit inferior priests, attend great festivals, administer prescribed rites in the temples, or perform solemn ceremonies in the sacred groves. Their retinue and equipage are very magnificent. Pioneers precede the splendid procession, to level high places in the roads, and fill up ravines. The lower castes retire to a distance while they pass by, lest their shadows should happen to touch them, or the consecrated air be polluted by inferior breath. The most sanctified among these priests are not only venerated, but absolutely worshipped with low prostration, when they appear in public. Some of them are believed to be incarnated deities. The rajahs, or princes, belong to the warrior caste; but they are restrained and regulated by the High Priests, whom they treat with profoundest reverence. Princes who become holy devotees acquire spiritual rank in addition to their hereditary dignity; but even under such circumstances, they are bound to treat Bramins with deferential humility. It is deemed an act of the highest piety to defend the priesthood from any danger, to bestow alms upon them, or make them heirs of worldly wealth. They are exempted from taxes and from corporeal punishment. To kill a Bramin intentionally is an inexpiable crime, and even to kill one by accident requires to be atoned for by terrible penances. The funeral pile for them must be lighted, as it is for the holiest sacrifices, with fire obtained by the friction of wood from the sacred groves. The obsequies must be solemnized with sacrifices to the Sun and the Planets, consisting of a ram, or a he-goat, without blemish. These ceremonies must be performed in a place previously consecrated by prayer, and sprinkled with holy water.

Soodras, and the castes below them, are expressly for-



bidden to devote themselves to a life of religious contemplation, to read the Sacred Books, or hear them read. The inequality of laws resulting from these lines of demarcation in society may be easily conjectured. If a Bramin kill one of his own caste, it is ordained that he perform severe penances in the forest during twelve years. If a Cshatriya involuntarily kills a Bramin, his term of penance is twenty-four years; if a Vaisya does the same, it is thirty-six years; if a Soodra, it is forty-eight years.

The education of a Bramin, if conducted with strictness, is somewhat arduous. In his youth, he is bound to be scrupulously chaste, to learn Sanscrit, study the Sacred Books, which are very voluminous, and treat his spiritual teachers with the most implicit obedience, however severe their requirements may be. In manhood, it is his duty to marry and rear up children to succeed him in his holy office. As he may contract pollution by the approach of a foreigner, or coming near any dead body, or touching any vessel or garment that has been used by one of inferior caste, or having an insect get crushed in the folds of his priestly robes, it is necessary to spend a great deal of time in performing ablutions and ceremonies of purification. He is forbidden to cause the death of any creature except for sacrifice, and therefore eats no flesh except that of victims. Wine and strong drinks are forbidden. He is required to be strictly virtuous, modest in conversation and manners, benevolent in his social relations, and faithful in the discharge of religious functions. If a Bramin has obeyed these rules, he may, if he chooses, transfer the duties of his sacerdotal office, and retire into the forest, to devote himself to a life of spiritual contemplation. If he intends to do this, he makes a feast for friends and relatives, and bestows farewell presents on them. The priests perform a great variety of ceremonies and recite prayers. He lays down the triple cord, which he has always worn as the external sign of his superior caste, assumes the hermit's coarse garment of woven bark, and bids adieu to the world. If his wife and children choose to accompany him,



in order to render his solitary life more comfortable by their attentions, it is considered a mark of great devotion on their part. But whether his family are with him or not, the hermit must live perfectly chaste, and devote himself entirely to religious meditation and sacrifices. If, after years of fasting, mortification, and prayer, he should break his vow of chastity, he loses all the fruit of his past labours. If he aims at being one of the highest order of saints, he must become still more ascetic. He must renounce his family, give up every species of property, sleep on the ground, and annihilate his body by such self-torments as ingenuity can devise. By this process he may finally attain absorption into The Divine Soul, which is the great object of devotional efforts among the Hindoos. They describe it as by no means a state of deadness, but as peaceful, free, and happy; serenely independent of all the world can give or take away; a state of unchangeable beatitude, which can only be understood by those who have experienced it. Arrived at this stage in the spiritual pilgrimage, there is no more need to offer sacrifices or study the Vedas. Truth constantly reveals itself by its own inward light, and the divine fire continually burning within the soul is sufficient worship.

This complete abstraction of the soul from the body, by solitude, prolonged fasts, and physical torture, may well be supposed to occasion strange states of nervous irritability and exaltation; but the promised bliss, the miraculous power, and the saintly renown, are so much coveted, that devotees usually endure their sufferings with great courage and perseverance. One of them told the Abbé Dubois: "Every day my spiritual master obliged me to gaze fixedly at the firmament, without changing my posture or winking my eyes. This gave me a terrible headache. I thought I saw sparkles of fire, flaming globes, and other meteors. My teacher had himself become blind of one eye by these exercises."

Another said: "I was ordered to keep awake most of the night, striving not to think of any thing at all. I was

instructed to hold my breath as long as nature could possibly endure it. Once at midday, I found myself surrounded by thick darkness; at another time, I saw a very clear moon that appeared to move. My master congratulated me upon my progress, and prescribed more painful exertions. But I became fatigued, and returned to my former mode of life."

One of those hermit-schools in the forest, where pilgrims resorted, and saints served their noviciate, is thus described in the ancient poem Mahabharata, believed to have been written more than a thousand years before Christ:—"The king advanced toward the sacred grove, image of celestial regions. The river was filled with pilgrims, while the air resounded with voices of pious men repeating portions of the sacred writings. Followed by his minister of state and his grand priest, he advanced toward the hermitage, animated with desire to see the holy man, inexhaustible treasure of religious knowledge. He heard mysterious sentences, extracts from the Vedas, pronounced with rhythmical cadence by priests most learned in sacred maxims and religious ceremonies. This place was radiant with glory from the presence of a certain number of Bramins skilful in the preparation of sacrifices; while others of exemplary life chanted portions of the Vedas. All were men of cultivated intelligence and imposing exterior; men who possessed the principles of morality, and the science of the cultivation of the soul; men skilful to reconcile sacred texts, which do not agree together; men versed in grammar, poetry, logic, and chronology; men who understood causes and effects, who had penetrated the essence of matter, of movement, and of quality; who had studied the language of birds and bees [for omens]; who reposed their faith upon the works of Vyasa, and offered models of study from books of sacred origin. These places resemble the dwelling of Brahma."

The most ancient writings of the Hindoos teach the immortality of the soul, and its transmigration through various forms of being. Man is taught to consider the

numerous evils which afflict him in this life as the inevitable consequences of sins committed, either in his present form of existence, or in some previous state. He was sent into the world again to expiate them by penances and good works. The duties of his caste are a portion of his penance, and if he performs them faithfully, he will have a certain degree of reward thereunto belonging. If he accomplishes meritorious works in addition to these, his account will stand still more favourably, and when he is born into the world again, it may be into a higher caste. If he commits sins, instead of performing duties, he must make haste to expiate them by painful penances here, lest he receive the appropriate punishment in hell, and when that is finished, his soul be sent back to earth, to dwell in a lower caste or a barbarian nation, perhaps even in the form of a woman or an animal. The highest Bramin may gradually sink himself lower and lower, by sins and neglect of duty, until he is condemned to reappear in the world as a Pariah, or a reptile. But the desired good can be attained sooner or later by all, though it may be through manifold progressive changes. If the Soodra performs faithfully the duties of his station, he may return to earth as a Vaisya. If he fulfil this mission conscientiously, and adds meritorious works according to his knowledge, his soul may enjoy Paradise for a season, and when the recompense is completed, he may perhaps be born into the favoured caste of Bramins, bringing with him the accumulated wisdom and goodness acquired by his past experiences on earth or in Paradise. The Soodra, thus elevated to a Bramin, may finally, by annihilating his senses, and devoting himself entirely to religious contemplation, attain to complete absorption into the Universal Soul, and enjoy immortal beatitude, without any further necessity of submitting to birth or death.

One of their sacred poems represents the Supreme Being as saying: "Those who seek refuge near me shall not perish. Though they be born of ignoble parents, though they be women, or Vaisyas, or Soodras, they are upon the road to

supreme felicity ; much more the pure Bramins and pious royal sages."

They believe that every man is accompanied from birth to death by two attendant Spirits, one of whom keeps record of his good actions, the other of his sins. That within the external mortal body is a subtile invisible body, the seat of the spiritual faculties, the mediator between the soul and the senses. At death, this interior body is not laid aside with the material form. It accompanies the human soul through all its transmigrations, until the soul is finally absorbed into the Supreme Being, from whom it emanated. This invisible interior body, after successive sojourns on earth, in paradise, or hell, for ages, is finally cast off by the soul's complete absorption into Brahm.

Then the spiritual body returns to be again born on earth, and the organization of the external body it takes depends on the character of the soul it had previously accompanied. It is a common assertion among Hindoos that "Brahma inscribes the destiny of every mortal on his scull, and the gods themselves cannot avert it."

However, man is not entirely a passive machine in the hands of fate. Various spiritual influences act upon him while he is in the body. Some will lead him into the illusions of the passions, some into the shadows of ignorance and lethargy, and some to the calm regions of truth and virtue. By resolute efforts, they say, man can turn away from the shadows and illusions, and follow the real and unchangeable.

The Sacred Books describe fourteen spheres, the abodes of souls, many of whom have fallen from their original glory, and are returning to their primeval home, more or less slowly, through manifold transmigrations. This earth is one of the scenes of expiation and progress. It has six spheres above it, successive gradations of Paradise, and seven spheres below it, successive gradations of punishment, for purposes of purification. These abodes are dreary and dark, each more horrible than the other. In some, the ground is composed of deep mud, in others it is made of



hot copper, or planted thick with thorns, or crowded with venomous reptiles, such as serpents and vipers. The cruel are to be tormented by snakes; drunkards thrown into baths of liquid fire; seducers embraced by images of red-hot iron; the inhospitable are to have their eyes torn out by vultures; and despisers of Bramins are to stick fast in filthy mire with their heads downward. The seventh and deepest pit is of red-hot charcoal. Evil Spirits come up thence to receive the souls of wicked men. When souls come into the presence of Yama, Judge of the Dead, two attendants place before him the records of their lives; one of which enumerates their good deeds, the other their sins. If wicked thoughts and actions predominate, Yama delivers the trembling souls to Evil Spirits with orders to scourge them, or drag them over rocky paths, or expose them to be torn by awful beasts, or gnawed by fiery worms, or plunged into pits of flame. These abodes of suffering are always described as situated in the South, and the blessed regions in the North.

The first sphere above this earth is the Paradise of Indra, appropriated to those who have been charitable to the poor and zealous in the performance of religious ceremonies. Above this, are successive ascending spheres, for men of greater and greater degrees of holiness. Those who have died martyrs for religion, or performed very extraordinary acts of piety, inhabit the Paradise of Vishnu, in the fifth sphere. The sixth and highest is the Paradise of Brahma, reserved for men who never uttered a falsehood, and for women who burn themselves on the funeral pile of their husbands, a *voluntary* self-sacrifice, to expiate the sins of the deceased.

Indra's Paradise is more frequently described than the higher ones, perhaps because it is more generally hoped for, being attained by the easiest process. His resplendent palace, called Vajrayanta, is in the midst of blooming gardens, where grows the celestial fruit Amrita, which confers immortality on whoever tastes it. Ever-playing fountains preserve perpetual verdure. There is Camada, the cow of



abundance, the sacred horse Sajaṃ, and the white elephant Airavata. Indra and his wife are seated on a throne of gold, blazing with gems. They are surrounded by Spirits of Singing Stars, called Gandharvas, and by the Genii of Musical Instruments, called Gīnaras, who make celestial harmony with the voices of dancing nymphs, called Asparas; and as they sing, the air is perfumed with their fragrant breath. They mingle together in dances, and delight the eye with graceful evolutions.

Kalaisa, the palace of Siva, is on a silver mountain above the lofty peaks of Himalaya. "It is surrounded by an infinite variety of trees, which yield delicious fruit all the year round. Roses and other flowers fill the air with fragrance. The lake at the foot of the mountain is enclosed with pleasant groves of umbrageous trees. Peacocks and beautiful women delight the eye, and birds charm the ear with multifarious melody. The surrounding woods are filled with saints, who spend their time in contemplation and sacrifices to the gods. They are fair to look upon, with long white beards and graceful drapery. Round about the mountain are seven ladders, by which you ascend to a spacious plain, over which hangs a silver bell, self-sustained in the air, and a table too brilliant for mortal sight, with nine precious stones of various colours. Upon this table lies a silver rose, which contains two women, bright and fair as pearls. In the centre of the rose is the Sacred Triangle, that mysterious emblem, of which no mortal tongue may declare the significance."

The Mahabharata describes the Paradise of Vishnu as "eighty thousand miles in circumference, and formed of pure gold. The pillars of his palace, Vaicuntha, are entire gems; its architraves and pediments blaze with jewels. On a throne, radiant as the meridian sun, sits Vishnu, with his wife Lacshmi, reposing on lotus-blossoms. The goddess shines like a continued blaze of lightning, and her beautiful form exhales a fragrance which is diffused through Paradise. Lovely lakes surround the palace, and on their surface float myriads of red, blue, and white water-lilies.

The praises of Brahma are continually chanted by beautiful spirits, and the gods sometimes unite their voices with the worshippers. Garuda, the eagle god, guards the door."

The Hindoos, endowed by nature with keen susceptibility to pleasure, are eager to arrive at these paradisaical regions, where life is not for penance, and enjoyment is no sin. To obtain the promised rewards, they go through an immense number of religious ceremonies and severe penances. Almost every event of human life, and every portion of the day, has some prescribed prayer or sacrifice. They attribute an inherent value to acts of devotion, entirely independent of the spiritual state of those who perform them. If not accomplished exactly according to prescription, the desired effects will not follow. Even if this happen by some unavoidable accident, the reward will be lost, whatever might have been the purity of intention. But if the ceremony be performed strictly according to rule in every particular, the gods are unable to prevent the recompense thereunto belonging, however wicked the petitioner may be, or however bad his purpose in the power he wishes to acquire. An eternal necessity binds every act to its effect, which must manifest itself sooner or later. Their Sacred Books declare: "If fire is touched without thinking of fire, it burns him who touches it; poison will kill, though taken by accident; thus the name of God contains in itself essentially the virtue to consume sins." But each effort has its limited consequences, and can receive no more than belongs to it. When two giants asked Brahma for immortality, as a reward for terrible self-inflictions, he replied: "Your object in undertaking these penitential enterprises was to rule over three worlds. You have secured that object; but immortality cannot be granted you."

The three attributes of Brahm, called Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, are indicated by letters corresponding to our A. U. M., generally pronounced Om. This mystic Word is never uttered except in prayer, and the sign which represents it in their temples is an object of profound adoration. Their

Sacred Books declare it to be the first Word uttered by Brahma, and call it "the first-born of the Creator." "Like the pure ether, it encloses in itself all the qualities, all the elements of Brahma. It is the name and the body of Brahma. It is consequently infinite, like him, and is the Creator and Ruler of all things." "Brahma, meditating upon this Divine Word, found therein primitive water." "All ordained rites, such as oblation to fire, and solemn offerings, pass away; but A. U. M. passes not away; since it is a symbol of the Most High, the Lord of all created things." In the Sacred Books called Vedas, The Word utters a soliloquy, in which he praises himself as "the Universal Soul."

There is likewise a prayer in the Vedas, called Gayatree, which consists of three measured lines, and is considered the holiest and most efficacious of all their religious forms. Sir William Jones translates it thus: "Let us adore the supremacy of that Spiritual Sun, the godhead, who illuminates all, who re-creates all, from whom all proceed, to whom all must return; whom we invoke to direct our undertakings aright in our progress toward his holy seat." He gives the following paraphrase as expressive of the meaning it conveys to a devout Hindoo: "What the *sun* and *light* are to this visible world, the Supreme *good* and *truth* are to the intellectual and invisible universe; and as our corporeal eyes have a distinct perception of objects enlightened by the sun, thus our souls acquire certain knowledge, by meditating on the light of *truth*, which emanates from the Being of beings. That is the light, by which alone our minds can be directed in the path of beatitude." One of the celebrated Hindoo saints thus expounds the Gayatree: "We meditate on the Supreme, Omnipresent, Internal Spirit of this splendid sun, who is earnestly sought for by such as dread further mortal birth; who resides in every body, as the all-pervading soul and controller of the mind, and constantly directs our intellect toward the acquisition of virtue, wealth, physical enjoyment, and final beatitude."

This prayer should be pronounced with Om at the beginning, and Om at the end. If omitted at the beginning, the desired reward will fail; if at the end, the reward will be of short duration. Their commentators affirm that "whoever repeats these once, or ten times, or a hundred times, shall obtain bliss in a proportionate degree. After the repetition let him meditate on him who is One only, and all-pervading; thereby all religious observances, though not performed, shall have been virtually performed." According to their Sacred Books, "whoever repeats them every day for three years, without negligence, shall approach the Most High God, become free as air, and after death acquire an ethereal essence." This form of worship is deemed so holy that it shocks a Bramin to hear it uttered by a foreigner, or one of inferior caste. An English gentleman, who had learned the Gayatree in Sanscrit, began to repeat it, unconscious of doing harm, in the presence of a pious Bramin, who, with terrified aspect, instantly stopped his ears, and hurried from the room. No people in the world manifest greater veneration for religious subjects than the Hindoos. A learned Bramin, reading a sacred poem to Sir William Jones, omitted the portions relating to Brahma, because it was deemed profanation to make them known to any but priests; and so sincere were his devout feelings, that his voice was often interrupted by tears.

The most ancient and honoured of all their Sacred Books are the Vedas; a name signifying Laws, or Ordinances, and derived from a root meaning Light, Fire. They believe them to have existed in the mind of Brahma himself, before the creation, and that the first man received them directly from his mouth. They are divided into four books, called the Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Sama Veda, and the Atharva Veda. Portions of the last contain fewer obsolete terms than the other volumes, and are therefore supposed to be less ancient. Few, even of the most learned Bramins, can read all passages in the three oldest Vedas. Copies of the original manuscripts are now.



exceedingly scarce. Numerous commentaries have been written upon them, from time immemorial, called Shastras; a common designation for all their Sacred Writings.

The Vedas are written in Sanscrit, which means The Perfect; it is likewise called Deva Nagara, or the Divine Language. Scholars pronounce it the most copious and excellent of all the ancient tongues; and this fact is a plain indication that it was formed by a people considerably advanced in civilization, who had many ideas to express. But its origin extends too far back into the darkness of antiquity to be traced by history. The people who spoke it passed away from the face of the earth such a very long time ago, that it has been a dead language beyond the memory or the records of man. The knowledge of it was confined to learned Bramins, until it attracted the attention and employed the industry of European scholars, in the last century.

The Hindoos believe that the Vedas are as old as the creation of the world. Learned Bramins profess to find traces of their existence as far back as two hundred and sixty years after our date of the Deluge; that is, two thousand and eighty-eight years before the Christian era. Sir William Jones says: "That the Vedas were actually written before the Flood, I shall never believe; but they are very ancient, and far older than other Sanscrit compositions." He thinks the Yajur Veda can be traced as far as one thousand five hundred and eighty years before Christ; that is, one hundred years before the birth of Moses. He arrived at this conclusion from certain astronomical statements therein contained. The learned Heeren says: "There is no reliable data by which to ascertain the precise period, either when the separate parts were written, or when they were arranged in their present order. Their origin is involved in deepest obscurity. They are without doubt the oldest works composed in Sanscrit. This is sufficiently attested by the obsolete idiom in which they are written. Another proof is derived from the fact that all the Sanscrit writings, even the most ancient, allude to the



Vedas as already in existence, and cite numerous passages from them, at almost every page." The various Hindoo sects all profess to find authority for their doctrines in these Sacred Oracles; but the Vedas themselves give no indications of separation into sects. They do not even allude to the great sects of Siva, and of the two incarnations of Vishnu, called Rama and Crishna, though Hindoo monuments prove them to be of extreme antiquity.

The manuscripts of the Vedas made forty-two volumes, folio. On account of their great bulk, the obsolete expressions, and the metaphorical obscurity of style, they were condensed and arranged in their present form, by a learned Bramin. This collection is called the Vedanta, or Substance of the Vedas, and is generally received as of equal authority with the original. There is no certain evidence when this compilation was made; but Oriental scholars agree that it must have been more than two thousand years ago. The work is attributed to Vyasa, which is a common term applied to all compilers. Heeren says:—"Vyasa had numerous disciples, who instructed others in their turn. At last, the variations in the manner of reading and reciting the text are said to have given rise to no less than one thousand one hundred different schools. These alterations would, for the most part, only concern outward forms of pronunciation; and they must have been made many centuries ago; for the numerous quotations in the oldest writings agree with the modern copies of the Vedas."

Nothing can exceed the reverence paid to these Sacred Writings. It is not allowable to bring them into contact with animal substances, such as leather or woollen. He who uses them must first perform prescribed ablutions and other religious ceremonies. It is deemed sacrilege to read them in the presence of a wicked man, or within the sound of whipping, or in a place through which a corpse is carried. Bramins alone may study or explain them; and they have always had it in their power to communicate to other castes as much, or as little, as they pleased. The

next caste, comprising princes and nobles, are allowed to hear them expounded, and even to read portions, under the superintendence of Bramins. The third caste, of merchants, who are generally correct grammarians, and often good poets, are permitted to hear only such parts as relate to medicine. The lower castes are rigorously excluded from all knowledge of them. The Code of Menu ordains: "If a Soodra reads the Vedas to either of the three other castes, or if he listens to them, heated oil, wax, and melted tin shall be poured into his ears, and the orifice stopped up; and if he learns the Vedas by heart, he shall be put to death." But "the Bramin, who knows all the Vedas by heart, and recites them three times with devotion, will be delivered from all sin. He would incur no punishment, though he had eaten food from the most unclean hands, or even if he had killed the inhabitants of three worlds." Devout men, who have thus read and recited the Vedas, are called "twice born," in allusion to a new spiritual birth, in addition to their natural birth.

Inherent sacredness and supernatural power are ascribed to the identical Sanscrit words, and it is considered sacrilege to make the slightest alteration in the arrangement of the sentences. Hence, the Bramins have evinced an almost insurmountable reluctance to have them translated into foreign languages. Probably no one of them would have dared to show the manuscripts for such a purpose, had it not been for their hopeless conviction that everything is going to predestined destruction in this present Cali Yug, and therefore it matters little what is done with anything this perishable world contains. But though this view has reconciled some to imparting a knowledge of their religion to foreigners, the stricter sort have always regarded translations of their Sacred Books with mingled feelings of terror and sadness.

The Vedas are collections of detached pieces, by different authors, whose names are therein cited. They purport to be the utterance of certain very ancient and celebrated saints, called Rishis, who received them directly from Di-

vine Beings. Some of these authors were Bramins, and some were royal personages, who had attained to complete sanctity. They are represented as holy anchorites in the forest, a circumstance which indicates the extreme antiquity of that mode of life in India. Heeren says : "The worship prescribed concerns a religious system, which, according to the unanimous opinion of all who have studied the subject, has for its foundation the belief in One God. This Divinity, however, was manifested in the grand phenomena of Nature, which were themselves separately invoked as deities. In this sense, we might consider it a kind of natural religion, but it is interwoven with a tissue of refined speculations on the infinite, on the origin of things, the emanation of beings, and their absorption into the God-head; and this constitutes their peculiarity." The names of Vishnu and Siva are only mentioned two or three times; but the "One Immutable Being" is mentioned much more frequently. The prayers are mostly addressed to Sun, Moon, Fire, Air, Water, and other forces of Nature, whose presiding Spirits are supposed to be subordinate agents of the Supreme, and different manifestations of his being. The Vedas contain civil laws, moral precepts, treatises on medicine, astronomy, astrology, and divination, dialogues concerning God and the soul, and a prescribed ritual for external worship. Each Veda is divided into two parts. The first part, called the Sanhita, contains hymns, prayers, invocations, rules concerning sacrifices to be offered to Spirits of the Planets and of the Elements, and to the souls of departed ancestors; and various other things connected with the ceremonials of religion. The second portion is called the Upanishad, which signifies The Knowledge of God, or the Science of God. These portions contain moral precepts, and dialogues between the Rishis and the Deities, concerning the existence of God, the origin and destiny of the soul, and other kindred topics. They teach the existence of One Invisible Being, and urge subjugation of the senses, and devout contemplation, as the means of obtaining from above intuitive perceptions, which they call

"science," by whose divine agency the human soul is brought into perfect and blessed union with the Supreme One.

In the first two Vedas, there is but a small proportion of this spiritual teaching. The third comprises the most detailed and abstract researches of that description; and even in the fourth, which is not so highly esteemed by European scholars, they occupy more than half the whole book. The Sanhita, or Liturgy, of the first and second Vedas, contains hymns and prayers to be recited at sacrifices, festivals, the consecration of Bramins, the inauguration of kings, and other public ceremonies. Some of them are said to be composed by the ancient Rishis, others are ascribed to various Deities. The hymns of the third Veda are exclusively intended for chanting. The fourth contains more than seven hundred and sixty hymns and prayers. A large proportion are forms of imprecation, for the punishment of the wicked and the destruction of enemies. There are also numerous invocations to the Spirit of the Sun, of the Air, of Water, and of other forces of Nature, to procure rain and good harvests, or to avert sickness and calamity.

The following extracts will serve to give some idea of the more spiritual portions of the Vedas. Where the word *science* occurs, it must be remembered that the writers intended thereby to express perceptions of divine truth, obtained by immediate revelations from God to the soul.

"Any place where the mind of man can be undisturbed, is suitable for the worship of the Supreme Being."

"The vulgar look for their gods in water; the ignorant think they reside in wood, bricks, and stones; men of more extended knowledge seek them in celestial orbs; but wise men worship the Universal Soul."

"There is One living and true God; everlasting, without parts or passion; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker and Preserver of all things."

"What and how the Supreme Being is, cannot be ascertained. We can only describe him by his effects and



works. In like manner as we, not knowing the real nature of the sun, explain him to be the cause of the succession of days and epochs."

"That Spirit, who is distinct from Matter, and from all beings contained in Matter, is not various. He is One, and he is beyond description; whose glory is so great, there can be no image of him. He is the incomprehensible Spirit, who illuminates all, and delights all; from whom all proceed, by whom they live after they are born, and to whom all must return. Nothing but the Supreme Being should be adored by a wise man."

"He overspreads all creatures. He is merely Spirit, without the form either of a minute body, or an extended one, which is liable to impression or organization. He is the ruler of the intellect, self-existent, pure, perfect, omniscient, and omnipresent. He has from all eternity been assigning to all creatures their respective purposes. No vision can approach him, no language describe him, no intellectual power can comprehend him."

"Heaven is his head, the sun and moon are his eyes, the earth is his feet, space is his ears, air is his breath, the Vedas are his speech, and the visible creation is his intellect; for he is The Soul of the Universe."

"He by whom the birth, the existence, and the annihilation of the world are regulated is The Supreme Soul. The sun and all the luminaries borrow their light from him."

"As a thousand rays emanate from one flame, thus do all souls emanate from The One Eternal Soul, and return to him."

"As the web proceeds from the spider and is absorbed again by her, as vegetables proceed from the earth, as hair and nails grow from animate beings, so is the universe evolved from the One Eternal Supreme Soul."

"The Supreme Soul dwells in the form of four-footed animals, and in another place he is full of glory. He lives in the form of the slave, he is smaller than the grain of barley. He is the smallest of the small, and the greatest of the great; yet he is neither small nor great."



"Without hand or foot, he runs rapidly, and grasps firmly; without eyes, he sees all; without ears, he hears all. He knows whatever can be known; but there is none who knows him. The wise call him the Great, Supreme, Pervading Spirit."

"From him emanates the firmament, illustrated by the sun and moon; the moon accumulates clouds in the sky; the clouds descend in rain, which brings forth vegetables from the earth; the essence derived from the nourishment of these vegetables, man imparts to woman; through these progressive physical causes, numerous offspring proceed from the omnipresent Supreme Soul."

"He who considers all beings as existing in the Supreme Spirit, and the Supreme Spirit as pervading all beings, cannot view with contempt any creature whatsoever."

"God has created the senses to be directed toward external objects. They can perceive only these objects, and not the Eternal Spirit. The sage, who desires an immortal life, withdraws his senses from their natural course, and perceives the Supreme Being everywhere present."

"This body formed of bones, skin, and nerves, filled with fat and flesh, is a great evil, and without reality. It ought to perish. Of what use then is it for the soul to seek corporeal pleasures?"

"The inhabitants of this body are cupidity, anger, desire for wealth, error, anxiety, envy, sadness, discord, disappointment, affliction, hunger, thirst, disease, old age, death. Of what use is it then to seek the pleasures of this body?"

"Through strict veracity, uniform control of mind and senses, abstinence from sexual indulgence, and ideas derived from spiritual teachers, man should approach God, who, full of glory and perfection, works in the heart, and to whom only votaries freed from passion and desire can approximate."

"Material objects have no duration. As the fruits of the trees grow and perish, so do these objects. What is there in them worthy to be acquired? Great things and small, commanders of powerful armies, kings who govern

the earth, have relinquished their riches and passed into the other world. Nothing could save them. They were men, and they could not escape death. The Gandharvas, the Sooras, the stars themselves, do not endure forever. The seas will one day be dried up, the high mountains will fall, even the polar star will change its place, the earth will be swallowed in the waves. Such is the world! Of what avail is it to seek its pleasures? One may perform meritorious works, from self-interested motives, during his whole life, he may enjoy all pleasures, still he must come back into the world. He can only continue passing from one world to another. There is nothing desirable, except the science of God. Out of this, there is no tranquillity and no freedom. To be attached to material things is to be chained; to be without attachment is to be free."

"May this soul of mine, which is a ray of perfect wisdom, pure intellect, and permanent existence, which is the unextinguishable light fixed within created bodies, without which no good act is performed, be united by devout meditation with the Spirit supremely blest and supremely intelligent."

"O thou, who givest sustenance to the world, unveil that face of the *true* sun, which is now hidden by a veil of golden light! so that we may see the *truth*, and know our whole duty."

"He who inwardly rules the sun is the same immortal Spirit who inwardly rules thee."

"That All-pervading Spirit, which gives light to the visible sun, even the same in *kind* am I, though infinitely distant in *degree*. Let my soul return to the immortal Spirit of God, and then let my body return to dust."

"I am in this world like a frog in a dry well. Thou only, O Lord, art my refuge; Thou only art my refuge."

"By one Supreme Ruler is this universe pervaded; even every world in the whole circle of Nature. Enjoy pure delight, O man, by abandoning all thoughts of this perishable world; and covet not the wealth of any creature existing."

"God, who is perfect wisdom and perfect happiness, is the final refuge of the man who has liberally bestowed his wealth, who has been firm in virtue, and who knows and adores the Great One."

"To those regions where Evil Spirits dwell, and which utter darkness involves, surely go after death all such men as destroy the purity of their own souls."

"Preserve thyself from self-sufficiency, and do not covet property belonging to another."

"The way to eternal beatitude is open to him who without omission speaketh truth."

"If any one assumes the garb of the religious, without doing their works, he is not of the religious. Whatever garments he wears, if his works are pure, he belongs to the order of pure men. If he wears the dress of a penitent, and does not lead the life of a penitent, he belongs to the men of the world; but if he is in the world, and practises penitential works, he ought to be regarded as a penitent."

"Those who observe religious rites, but attend only to the worship of the sacred fire, or offerings to saints, or sacrifices to the souls of departed ancestors, or to men and other creatures, without attending to the worship of the celestial gods, enter into the region of shadows. But those who habitually adore the celestial gods only, neglecting the worship of the sacred fire, offerings to the saints, to the souls of ancestors, to men and other creatures, enter into regions of still deeper shadow."

"Hold the breath, remain without movement, repeat inwardly A. U. M. twelve times, thinking that the soul is one with God; draw in a full supply of breath, and hold it while inwardly repeating A. U. M. twenty-four times; afterward, hold the breath while inwardly repeating the same as many times as possible, thinking meanwhile of God as perfect Being, which can be revealed only by its own light. Continue this exercise three months, without fear and without idleness. In the fourth month, good Spirits will appear to you; in the fifth, you will acquire the qualities of good Spirits; in the sixth, you will become God."

"He who offers sacrifices, at the prescribed times, is by them transported to the Paradise of Indra. His offerings make entrance for him into this heaven, and say to him: It is the summit of the heavens; there is the fruit of thy good works."

"All works ought to be regarded merely as means of purifying the intelligence, as means to guide the traveller to his home."

"No man can acquire knowledge of the soul without abstaining from evil acts, and having control over the senses and the mind. Nor can he gain it, though with a firm mind, if he is actuated by desire for reward. But man may obtain knowledge of the soul by contemplation of God."

"The science of God, leading to absorption in him, is one thing; rites, which procure enjoyments, are another. Divine science, and rewards belonging to the observance of rites, both present themselves to the choice of man. He who prefers faith, and despises reward, is endowed with wisdom. Little wisdom has he who devotes himself to rites for the sake of reward, and thus excludes himself from the enjoyment of eternal beatitude. The wisest comprehend that the science of God and the practice of works are altogether opposite to each other."

"The ignorant suppose that the digging of wells, and other good works recommended in the Vedas, and the sacrifices therein prescribed, are the most meritorious. They have no idea of the science of God, which is the only source of true happiness. By excessive desire for reward, they are deprived of this knowledge. They will assuredly obtain the objects they seek by the practice of works and ceremonies; but when the period of their recompense in Paradise has expired, they must descend to the world again, subjecting themselves to new transmigrations, into the forms of men, or animals, or plants; liable to birth, sorrow, disease, and death. These foolish ones, plunged in ignorance, believing themselves wise, resemble the blind leading the blind. But men who have maturely considered



the perishable nature of all advantages that works can procure, hermits who live in the forest upon alms, fathers of families, endowed with wisdom, worshipping Brahma, practising austerities, subduing the senses, these are delivered from all sin, and ascend to the highest heaven, where reigns the immortal Brahma, as ancient as the world."

"Though man finds pleasure in that which he sees, hears, smells, tastes, and touches, he derives no benefit from the pleasure, because the soul, in attaching itself to external objects, forgets its high origin, which is The Universal Soul."

"It is the nature of the soul to identify itself with the object of its tendency. If it tend toward the world, it becomes the world. If it tend toward God, it becomes God."

"Men endowed with penetrating insight, with a spirit full of wisdom, having withdrawn their senses inward, annihilate them. They annihilate the interior senses, by subjecting them to the control of intelligence; they annihilate intelligence, by submitting it to the soul; they annihilate the soul in the collection of souls; and the collection of souls in the One Universal Soul."

"Saints wise and firm, exempt from passion, assured of the soul's divine origin, satisfied solely with the science of God, have seen God everywhere present with them, and after death have been absorbed in him; even as the air within a jar, by the destruction of the jar, returns to universal space."

"The science of God is not acquired by study of the Vedas, nor through retentive memory, nor yet by constant hearing of spiritual instruction; but he who seeks to obtain it, finds it. The soul renders itself manifest to him."

"When man has withdrawn heart, soul, and senses, from external things, and keeps himself without impulse toward them, it is the great degree of union. Then man will not fall into error by mistake or negligence. He watches incessantly to preserve himself from it. If all do not see the soul, it is because their soul turns the senses



from her, and makes them tend outward; for the soul is the true controller, and does all she wills."

"When the sage perceives the Eternal Cause everywhere present, then abandoning the consequences of good works and of bad works, he becomes perfect, and obtains complete absorption. The sage who recognizes that God resides in all creatures, forgets all idea of duality. He is convinced that there is only One real existence, and that is God. He directs all his senses toward God only, the origin of his own consciousness. He concentrates upon him all his love, detaches his spirit from all earthly objects, by fixing his soul continually upon God. A person thus devoted to God is esteemed the most perfect among the adorers of the Divinity."

"To know that God *is*, and that *all* is God, this is the substance of the Vedas. When one attains to this, there is no more need of reading, or of works; they are but the bark, the straw, the envelope. No more need of them when one has the seed, the substance, the Creator. When one knows Him by science, he may abandon science, as the torch which has conducted him to the end."

The following is one of the numerous prayers contained in the Vedas: "Where they who know the Great One go, through holy rites and through piety, thither may fire raise me. May fire receive my sacrifices. Mysterious praise to Fire! May air waft me thither. May air increase my spirits. Mysterious praise to Air! May the sun draw me thither. May the sun enlighten my eye. Mysterious praise to the Sun! May the moon bear me thither. May the moon receive my mind. Mysterious praise to the Moon! May the plant Soma lead me thither. May Soma bestow on me its hallowed milk. Mysterious praise to Soma! May Indra carry me thither. May Indra give me strength. Mysterious praise to Indra! May water lead me thither. May water bring me the stream of immortality. Mysterious praise to the Waters! Where they who know the Great One go, through holy rites and through piety, thither may Brahma conduct me. May Brahma

lead me to the Great One. Mysterious praise to Brahma!"

The Code of Menu is next in antiquity to the Vedas, and ranks the next highest as sacred authority. It is called Menu Dherma Shastra, which signifies Ordinances of God. Sir William Jones dates its existence one thousand two hundred and eighty years before Christ; about three hundred years later than his date of the Yajur Veda. This Code embraces political regulations as well as religious, and up to the present day it forms the basis of the whole civil policy of Hindostan. It rests everywhere on the authority of the Vedas, quotes them at every page, and is regarded with similar reverence. When India came under the government of Great Britain, it was very desirable to have an English translation of their Sacred Laws, that the administration might avoid unnecessary interference with the ancient customs of the people. But the Bramin, who read them to Sir William Jones, earnestly begged to have his name concealed; so great was the offence of making those holy words known to a foreigner. On no account would he read them on a forbidden day of the moon, or without first performing the ceremonies prescribed in the Vedas, previous to reading the Sacred Writing. When the English obtained leave to translate this Code, they were required to promise that it should be bound in silk, or velvet, and by no means in any kind of leather, which, being the skin of an animal, was deemed unclean. The Bramins at Benares positively and unanimously refused to assist in the translation.

The book takes its title from Menu Satyavrata, called likewise Vaivaswata, or Child of the Sun, also Grandson of Brahma, whom Hindoos believe to have escaped from a great deluge, and reigned over the whole world in the earliest ages of their chronology. He is represented as saying: "Brahma, having created this code of laws, himself taught it fully to me in the beginning. Afterward, I taught it to Marishi and the nine other holy sages."

He thus describes creation:—"This world was all darkness, undiscernible, undistinguishable altogether, as in a

profound sleep, till the self-existing, invisible God, making it manifest with five elements, and other glorious forms, perfectly dispelled the gloom. Having willed to produce various beings from his own divine essence, he first with a thought created the waters, and placed in them a productive seed. This seed became a golden egg blazing like a thousand suns. In this egg he was himself born in the form of Brahma, the great Father of all Spirits. The Great Power remained inactive in the egg a whole year, at the close of which he caused the egg to divide itself, and from its two divisions he framed the heavens above and the earth beneath. In the midst he placed the subtile ether, the eight regions, and the permanent receptacle of waters. From the Supreme Soul he drew forth Mind, existing substantially, though immaterial, and unperceived by sense." Vishnu is described as assisting in the creation of the world, under the name of Narayana, "The Spirit Moving on the Waters." In common with other Asiatic nations, they suppose creation to have taken place in six successive periods, and that man and woman were formed last.

The following extracts will serve to give some idea of the Code of Menu :

"To patriarchs, to deities, and to mankind, the Scripture is an eye giving constant light. The Veda Shastra could not be made by human faculties, nor can it be measured by human reason."

"The birth which man derives from his parents is merely human; that which the Vedas procure for him is the true birth, exempt from age or death."

"To a man contaminated by sensuality, neither the Vedas, nor liberality, nor sacrifices, nor strict observances, nor pious austerities, will procure felicity."

"A wise man must faithfully discharge all moral duties, even though he does not constantly perform the ceremonies of religion. He will fall very low, if he performs ceremonial acts only, and fails to discharge his moral duties."

"By honouring his father, mother, and sister, a man effec-

tually does whatever ought to be done. This is the highest duty, and every other is subordinate. All duties are performed by him who completely honours these three; but to him by whom they are dishonoured, all other acts are fruitless."

"Whatever oblations a man actuated by strong faith piously offers, as the sacred laws have directed, become a perpetual unperishable gratification to his ancestors in the other world."

"Those rulers of the earth, who, desirous of defending each other, exert their utmost strength in battle, without ever averting their faces, ascend after death directly to Paradise."

"He whose sins are mostly corporeal, will assume after death a vegetable or mineral form; for sins mostly verbal, he will assume the form of a bird or beast; for sins merely mental, he will again assume a human form, but in some of its lower conditions. An unauthorized teacher of the Sacred Books will return into a dumb body. He who steals a lamp, will be born blind."

"A Bramin who drinks spirituous liquors, shall migrate into the form of a worm, or a fly feeding on ordure, or of some ravenous animal."

"Any twice-born man, who has intentionally drank spirit of rice, through perverse delusion of mind, ought to swallow more spirit in flame, and thus atone for his offence by severely burning his body."

"Should a Bramin, who has once tasted the holy juice of the Moon-plant, so much as smell the breath of a man who drinks intoxicating spirits, he must remove the taint by thrice repeating the Gayatree, while he suppresses his breath in water; and by eating clarified butter after that ceremony."

"He who explains the Law to a man of servile caste, and instructs him in the mode of expiating sin, (except by the aid of the Bramins,) sinks with that man into the hell called Asamorita."

"A Soodra, though emancipated by his master, is not re-

leased from a state of servitude; for such a man was created by the Supreme Being for the purpose of serving Bramins. No superfluous collection of wealth may be made by a Soodra, even though he have power to make it; since a servile man who has amassed riches becomes proud, and gives pain even to the Bramins."

"If a wife speak unkindly to her husband, she may be superseded by another without delay."

"A woman is never fit for independence."

"A man untainted with covetousness may be sole witness, and may have more weight than many women; because the female understanding is apt to waver."

"Whatever exists in the universe is all, in effect, though not in form, the wealth of the Bramin; since he is entitled to it by his primogeniture and eminence in rank."

"He who mentions a Bramin with contumely should have an iron style, ten fingers long, thrust red-hot into his mouth. He who, through pride, attempts to give instructions to the Bramins concerning their duty, should have hot oil dropped into his mouth and ears."

"Let not the king, though in the greatest distress, provoke the Bramins to anger; for, if once enraged, they could, by sacrifices and imprecations, immediately destroy him, with his troops, elephants, horses, and chariots."

"No greater crime is known on earth than killing a Bramin. The king must not even form in his own mind the idea of slaying a priest. He must never put a Bramin to death, though convicted of all possible crimes. He may banish the offender from his realm, but with all his property secure, and his body uninjured."

"Let the murderer of a Bramin voluntarily stand as a mark for the most skilful archers; or throw himself into the fire three times, his whole length; or walk a hundred leagues reciting a Veda, eating little, and keeping all his senses subdued; or make a pilgrimage to the source of the Sarawasti, nourishing himself only on wild seeds; or recite the collection of Vedas three times, without taking nourishment; or expose his life to save a cow, or a Bramin.



Thus may he expiate the unintentional murder of a Bramin; but if the crime be committed with premeditation, there is no way in which it *can* be expiated."

"He who has committed incest, ought to walk constantly in a south-west direction, till he falls dead from exhaustion; or embrace a red-hot statue; or lie on a burning fire; thus will he be purified by death."

"He who, having committed a sin, makes parade of penances and meritorious acts, concealing his crime under an appearance of sanctity, thus deceiving women and servants, such Bramins are accursed in this life, and after death, by all those who pronounce the name of Brahma." [That is, by Bramins.]

"Let no father, who knows the law, receive a gratuity, however small, for giving his daughter in marriage. The man, who through avarice takes a gratuity for that purpose, is a seller of his offspring."

"Let a widow emaciate her body, by living voluntarily on pure flowers, roots, and fruit. When her lord is deceased, let her not even pronounce the name of another man. Let her continue till death forgiving all injuries, performing harsh duties, avoiding every pleasure of the senses, and cheerfully practising the incomparable rules of virtue, which have been followed by such women as were devoted only to one husband. Many thousands of Bramins, having avoided sensuality from early youth, though they have left no issue in their families, have nevertheless ascended to heaven. And, like those abstemious men, a virtuous wife ascends to heaven, though she have no child, if, after the decease of her lord, she devote herself to pious austerity. But a widow, who, from a wish to bear children, slights her deceased husband by marrying again, brings disgrace on herself here below, and shall be excluded from the seat of her lord."

"The Bramin who has not caused the least fear to any creature whatsoever, has nothing to fear after he has quitted his body."

"In whatever occupation Brahma first employed any

vital soul, to that occupation the same soul attaches itself spontaneously, when it receives a new body, again and again. Whatever quality, noxious or innocent, harsh or mild, just or unjust, false or true, conferred on any being at its creation, the same quality enters it of course on its future births."

"The sacrifice required of Bramins is to gain knowledge and instruct others; of the Cshatriyas, that they protect others; of the Vaisyas, that they supply wants by commerce; of the Soodras, that they serve others."

"Some make sacrifice of their breath, by instructing others of God; some make sacrifice of their speech, by meditating upon God in silence. In speech and breath, thus employed, they perceive the imperishable fruits of true sacrificial offerings."

"Thoughts, words, the actions of the body, produce fruits happy or pernicious. From these result the superior, middling, and inferior transmigrations of men."

"By overcoming the senses, by suppressing joy and hate, man obtains immortality. Let the anchorite not rejoice to die, or wish to live; but wait for death as a day-laborer waits for him who assigned his task. Let him endure injuries, and despise no person. Let him be careful to commit no hostile action, out of care for his own preservation. Let him not be offended with those who are angry with him, but reply gently to those who curse him. Finding his pleasure in the contemplation of the Supreme Spirit, let him attach himself to nothing; but seek happiness in communion with himself."

"Like a tree carried far from the river which saw its birth, like a bird that flies from the branch where it rested, man ought to free himself from the body; for thus will he see himself delivered from the devouring monster of this world. Leaving the reward of good works to those who value it, and to his enemies the weight of his faults, he passes from contemplation to the bosom of eternal divinity."

"The soul itself is its own witness and its own refuge.

Offend not thy conscious soul, the supreme internal witness of men ! The sinful have said in their hearts, None see us. Yet the gods distinctly see them, and so does the Spirit within their own breasts. The guardian deities of the firmament, of the earth, of the waters, of the human heart, of the moon, of the sun, and of fire, of punishment after death, of the winds, of night, of both twilights, and of justice, perfectly know the state of all spirits clothed with bodies. Oh, friend to virtue ! that Supreme Spirit, which thou believest one and the same with thyself, resides in thy own bosom perpetually, and is an all-knowing inspector of thy goodness or thy wickedness. If, by speaking falsely, thou art not at variance with Yama the subduer of all, with Vaivaswata the punisher, with that Great Divinity that dwells in thy own breast, go not on a pilgrimage to the river Ganges, nor to the plains of Curu ; for thou hast no need of expiation."

Next to the Vedas, and the Code of Menu, the most ancient and the most venerated of the Sacred Books are two epic poems, called The Ramayana, and The Mahabharata. The extreme antiquity of both is proved by sculptures on exceedingly ancient temples, carved in solid rock. The subject of the Ramayana is the victory of the divine hero Rama, over Ravana, prince of the wicked genii, called Rakshasas. Evil Spirits came near gaining ascendancy over the benevolent Deities, because the latter had bound themselves by a promise to make their adversaries invulnerable, and they could not violate their word. Therefore, no one but a mortal could subdue the Prince of Evil ; and it must be a mortal of superhuman endowments. In this emergency, the gods besought Vishnu to become a man. He accordingly divided himself into four parts, and assumed the mortal shape of four brothers, of whom Rama was chief. But all the time that he was on earth in a human body, he remained the same Vishnu in celestial regions. In the course of his adventures in this world, he was banished by the king, and retired into a forest with his brother Lakshman and his wife Sita. There they all led the

life of holy penitents, and became renowned for miracles. After various contests with Evil Spirits, the god-man at last destroyed their prince Ravana, and brought them all into subjection. He then returned in glory to his celestial abode, taking with him those who had assisted his labors on earth.

The Ramayana is principally occupied with the battles and miracles of Rama, but moral maxims and theological doctrines are occasionally interspersed. The following precept is an antique gem:—"The sacrifice of a thousand horses has been put in the balance with one true word, and the one true word weighed down the thousand sacrifices. No virtue surpasses that of veracity. It is by truth alone that men attain to the highest mansions of bliss. Men faithless to the truth, however much they may seek supreme happiness, will not obtain it, even though they offer a thousand sacrifices. There are two roads which conduct to perfect virtue; to be true, and to do no evil to any creature."

The primitive city, founded by Menu, the first ruler of mankind, is thus described in the Ramayana: "It abounded with merchants of all sorts, male and female dancers, elephants, horses, and chariots. It was filled with riches, decorated with precious stones, abundantly supplied with all manner of provisions, beautified with temples and palaces, whose lofty summits equalled the mountains, adorned with baths and gardens, and thickly planted with mango trees. The air was fragrant with the perfume of flowers, with incense, and the sweet-smelling savour of sacrificial offerings. It was inhabited by twice-born men [the regenerated], who were profoundly learned in the Vedas, endowed with excellent qualities, full of sincerity, zeal, and compassion, and perfectly masters of their passions and desires. There was no covetous person in the city, no liar, no deceiver, no one of an evil or implacable disposition. None of the inhabitants lived less than one thousand years, and all left a numerous offspring. None of them went without ear-rings, necklaces, garlands, perfumes, and rich-



ly ornamented garments. No one gave the Bramins less than one thousand rupees; and none flinched from performing the duties appropriate to their respective situations."

The Mahabharata commemorates a later incarnation of Vishnu in the form of Crishna, and is supposed to be somewhat less ancient in date. Bramins attribute it to Vyasa, and say it was written before their era, the commencement of the Cali Yug; consequently more than five thousand years ago. Wilkins, the learned Oriental scholar, thinks there is satisfactory evidence of its being four thousand years old. Sir William Jones places it seven hundred years later. Sculptures on the old rock temples prove that they have not assigned too great antiquity to either of these poems. They abound with the adventures of gods, goddesses, and heroes, described with the vast accumulation of incidents and glittering redundancy of metaphor characteristic of Asiatic writings. The veneration in which they were held introduced many new ceremonies into worship, and greatly complicated theological machinery. Heeren says: "The Vedas were the real source of Hindoo religion; but their *mythology* came from later epic poems." The subject of the Mahabharata is the contest between two branches of the royal family, the Coros and the Pandos; during which Crishna sustains his relatives, the Pandos. This event is as famous in their ancient traditions, as was the Trojan war among the Greeks. The poem contains a celebrated episode, called the Bhagavat Geeta, from which extracts will be given in the following pages. It relates the history and conversations of Vishnu, while on earth in the form of Crishna. The subjugation of the passions and desires, as a means of attaining to complete holiness, forms its moral system. Heeren observes that "the poetry of no other nation exhibits the didactic character in such a striking manner as that of the Hindoos; for no other people were so thoroughly imbued with the persuasion that to give and receive instruction was the sole ultimate object of life."



There is a set of less ancient Sacred Books, called *Pouranas*, which means Old Legends. They consist principally of traditions concerning gods and men; such as the history of the Deluge, of their holy city Benares, the adventures of Siva, and the various incarnations of Vishnu. These books form the basis of modern popular theology in India. They have nearly superseded the Vedas, and being far less spiritual, they indicate the degeneracy which they have rapidly hastened. Sir William Jones gives a list of eighteen; believed to have been composed by holy men, who, through devout contemplation and self-annihilating practices, received inspiration directly from the Divine Source. They contain internal evidence of being written at different epochs, but there are no means of arriving at correct dates. Oriental scholars suppose they were not collected together until after the time of Alexander the Great, who was born three hundred and fifty-six years before Christ. Some of them ascribe more honour to Vishnu, others to Siva, whose adventures are described with the wildest range of imagination. The ancient doctrine of One Invisible God is almost entirely lost sight of. Large portions of them are filled with rules for external ceremonies; but in some of the dialogues such questions as these are started:

“What are the Three Principal Powers? How came Brahma into existence? How did he create the world? How is the soul united to the body? How is it absorbed into the Godhead? What are the various forms assumed by Vishnu? What is holiness? What are good works? What is the object of all these things?”

Father Bouchet, in his “*Letters from Hindostan*,” quotes the following account from one of the *Pouranas*:

“The inferior Spirits, who, ever since creation, have been multiplying themselves almost to infinity, did not at first enjoy the privilege of immortality. After numberless efforts to procure it, they had recourse to a Tree, which grew in Paradise, and by eating its fruit they became immortal. A Serpent, called Chien, appointed to guard the Tree of

Life, was so exasperated by their proceedings, that he poured out a great quantity of poison. The whole earth felt the terrible effects of it; and not one mortal would have escaped, had not the god Chiven taken pity on the human race, revealed himself under the shape of a man, and swallowed the poison." In their old sacred places, this tradition is commemorated by representations of a Tree, a Serpent, and human figures eating of the fruit.

Menu Satyavrata, author of the Code of Menu, is represented as a saint who attained to such extreme spirituality, that he subsisted entirely on water. The following account of his escape from the Deluge is taken from the Bhagavat Geeta:—"One day, when Brahma was inclined to slumber, the giant demon Hayagriva stole the four Vedas, swallowed them, and concealed himself in the sea. Vishnu, the Pervader and Preserver of the Universe, discovered the deed, and, assuming the shape of a small fish, he appeared to Menu. The saint recognized him to be an incarnated divinity by his immense growth in a few days. Suspecting him to be Vishnu, he thus addressed him: 'O thou Lotus-eyed, let me not approach in vain the feet of a deity, whose perfect benevolence has been extended to all, when, to our amazement, thou hast shown thyself in bodies, not indeed existing in reality, but successively exhibited.'

"The Lord of the Universe, loving the holy man, and intending to preserve him from the sea of destruction, caused by the wickedness of the age, thus addressed him: 'O thou tamer of enemies, in seven days from this time, the three worlds will be plunged in an ocean of death. But in the midst of the destroying waves, a large vessel, sent by me for thy use, shall stand before thee. Then shalt thou take all medicinal herbs, all variety of seeds, and accompanied by seven saints, with your respective wives, encircled by pairs of all brute animals, thou shalt enter the capacious ship, and continue in it, on an immense ocean, secure from the flood, and without light, except from the radiance of thy holy companions. When the ship shall be agitated

by impetuous winds, thou shalt fasten it with a large sea-serpent to my horn; for I will be near thee. Menu Satyavrata complied with these directions; and the Primeval Male [Brahma], speaking aloud to his own Divine Essence, pronounced for the instruction of Menu a Sacred History, explaining the principle of the soul and of external being. Vishnu then slew the demon, and recovered the Sacred Books. But the appearance of the horned fish was an illusion."

The ancient temples of Hindostan contain representations of Vishnu sustaining the earth while overwhelmed with the waters of the Deluge and convulsed by demons. A rainbow is seen on the surface of the subsiding waters.

The following is translated from the Padma Pourana:—"To Menu Satyavrata, that sovereign of the whole earth, were born three sons. The oldest was Sherma, then Charma, then Jyapeti. They were all men of good morals, excellent in virtuous deeds, skilled in the use of weapons, either to strike with, or be thrown, brave men, eager for victory in battle. But Satyavrata, being continually delighted with devout meditation, and seeing his sons fit for dominion, laid upon them the burden of government, whilst he remained honouring and satisfying the gods, and priests, and kine. One day, by the act of destiny, the king, having drunk mead, became senseless and lay asleep naked. Thus was he seen by Charma, and by him were his two brothers called. To whom he said: 'What now has befallen? In what state is this our sire?' By those two was he hidden with clothes, and called to his senses again and again. Having recovered his intellect, and perfectly knowing what had passed, he cursed Charma, saying: 'Thou shalt be the servant of servants; and since thou wast a laughter in their presence, from laughter shalt thou acquire a name.' Then he gave to Sherma the wide domain on the south of the snowy mountains; and to Jyapeti he gave all on the north of the snowy mountains. But he himself, by the power of religious contemplation, attained supreme bliss."

One of the Pouranas contains the following description

of the wedding between Siva the Generator, and Parvati, Goddess of Enchantments. It is probably a poetical allegory, to commemorate the beautiful phenomena of Nature's renovation in the Spring. "All the inhabitants of the celestial regions were summoned to arrange the ceremonials of marriage between Siva and Parvati. First came Brahma, mounted on his swan; next, Vishnu, riding his eagle. The rivers Ganges and Jumna, and the seven seas; the Gandharvas, and the Asparas; Vasooke, and other serpents; all ornamented with superb chains and ceremonial dresses, in obedience to the commands of Siva, were to be seen in the glittering cavalcade. Siva set out from the mountain Kailasa with the utmost pomp and splendour. His third eye flamed like the sun, and the crescent on his forehead assumed the form of a radiated diadem. His snakes were exchanged for chains of pearls and rubies, his ashes for sandal-wood and perfumes, and his elephant's skin for a silken robe. The Gandharvas and the Asparas joined in melodious songs, and the Ginarers with the magic of their musical instruments. Nature assumed the appearance of renovated youth; the earth exulted with acclamations of glory and triumph; fresh moisture invigorated the withered victims of time; a thousand happy and animating conceptions inspired the hearts of the intelligent, and enlightened the wisdom of the thoughtful; the kingdom of external forms obtained gladness; the world of intellect acquired brightness. The dwellers upon earth filled the casket of their ideas with jewels of delight, and reverend pilgrims exchanged their rosaries for pearls. The joy of those on earth ascended up to heaven; and the tree of bliss in heaven extended its branches downward to the earth. The eyes of the gods flamed like torches at sight of this enrapturing scene, and the hearts of the just kindled like touchwood while they listened to the ravishing symphonies. Siva set off like a garden in full bloom, and Paradise was eclipsed by his procession."

In relation to the amours of the gods, the Pouranas say :



“Adultery is a sin against the laws established in our societies; but Divine Beings are not subject to our laws of convenience. The incomprehensible views of God ought not to be confounded with those of men. There are actions of which the end is unknown, which would be criminal for us, but would not be so for either gods or saints; for holiness, like fire, purifies all things.”

The episode from the Mahabharata, called Bhagavat-Geeta, forms one volume of the Pouranas. It is more beautiful in style, and more spiritual in its teaching, than any of the others. According to the triple division of duties common among Hindoos, it prescribes three kinds of penance. “Penance of the *body*, to be chaste, and free from all offences; penance of *words*, to speak always with kindness and truth, and to read the Sacred Books diligently; penance of *thoughts*, to subdue one’s self, to purify the soul, to be silent, and disposed to benevolence.”

“To practise penance to obtain dignity or fame, or to give one’s self an air of sanctity, is a penance little worth, and has its source in inferior influences on the soul. Penances performed by a man attached to foolish doctrines, or those which consist in self-torment, or those whose end is to do injury to another, these have their source in the region of shadows.”

“God resides in the heart of all creatures.”

“When thy spirit shall have become perfectly free from the labyrinths in which it is involved, then thou wilt arrive at indifference concerning the Vedas and the sacred traditions.”

It is stated in the Pouranas that the Vedas were carried from India to Egypt, by a noble and blameless race of men, called Yadavas, who emigrated thither on account of the persecutions of a tyrant named Cansa; and that afterward a race of men called Pali, or Shepherds, went from India and conquered Egypt.

The idea that a dead uniformity of opinion prevails in Asiatic countries, is a mistake, originating in our ignorance of their internal history. There is certainly far less acti-



vity of mind than in Europe, and of course changes are more slow and limited in effect. But the same questions, which have agitated the theological schools of Europe, have disturbed the East also, under forms modified by their circumstances. They have an immense number of commentaries on their Sacred Books, filled with nice metaphysical distinctions and intricate arguments concerning disputed texts.

The division of the Vedas into two distinct portions, one teaching spiritual doctrines concerning the unity of God and the communion of the soul with Him, while the other prescribed elaborate ceremonials and the worship of many symbolical deities, originated in the idea that it was impossible to elevate the minds of the populace to the contemplation of One Invisible Spirit, and, therefore, it was necessary to clothe religious ideas in forms suited to their comprehension. Thus while higher doctrines were reserved for sages, the worship of external symbols was not only allowed to the ignorant, but absolutely prescribed, though always represented as far inferior to the contemplation of One Unchangeable Being.

The people accustomed to worship images of symbolical deities, soon chose one or another of them for a favourite, and regarded it as God himself. Thus, there grew up a very large body of worshippers of Siva, called Sivaites. All that the Vedas ascribe to the Supreme Being, they ascribe to Siva. When they speak of the final state of holiness at which a perfect saint arrives, they call it the absorption of his soul into Siva. They have a Sacred Book, which they say is a revelation from Siva; and they deny the possibility of salvation to those who do not believe in his incarnation therein described. Whenever one of his true worshippers dies, they believe he sends some of his attendant Spirits to usher the soul into his presence, and become a sharer of his felicity.

Another sect, nearly as numerous, adore the Supreme Being under the name of Vishnu, and are therefore called Vishnuites. Bramins alone officiate as priests among

them, as among the other sects; but they allow people of all castes to devote themselves to the contemplative life. They eat no flesh, refrain from bloody sacrifices, and are peculiarly distinguished by their tenderness towards animals. That portion of the Pouranas which favours this worship declares: "The devotees of Vishnu alone are in a situation to surmount the illusion of appearances. It is advantageous and meritorious to be born man; still more so to be born a Bramin; but a Bramin may corrupt himself and become abject. There is incomparably more merit and more nobleness in the practice of true devotion; but rigorous penances, long prayers, frequent ablutions, almsgiving, vows, and sacrifices, have no merit, and confer no beatitude, without this devotion to Vishnu."

"To avoid the pains of hell there are no means more efficacious than to remember Vishnu, and invoke his sacred name. Yes, his divine names have so much virtue, that even if pronounced without design, or by mistake, they will not fail to produce salutary effects."

The author of this Pourana goes on to tell the history of a Bramin, who had given himself up to all manner of vices. One of his sons was named Narayana, a title of Vishnu, signifying Moving on the Waters. When the wicked Bramin was dying, he called this son, without thinking that he was repeating one of the names of Vishnu. But the sacred word, thus carelessly pronounced, saved him from all his sins, and immediately opened for him the gates of Paradise.

All Hindoo theology teaches the pre-existence of souls, who are gliding through the universe, and assuming multifarious forms, till they complete the great circle of destiny, and become the Supreme Soul again, as they were at the beginning. The belief that Spirits descended from their original sphere and became men, that by holiness they might become beatified spirits in Paradise, and then return to earth to be born again in some new form of mortal existence, naturally gave rise to the idea that men remarkable for wisdom or holiness *had* descended from some

higher sphere, and were in fact gods incarnated in a human form to fulfil some great mission. The Invisible One, who could only be contemplated by an abstraction of the intellect, was too far removed from a great majority of minds; and even the powerful emanations, Vishnu and Siva, appealed to their sympathies far more strongly when brought down to them in the persons of mortals who lived in their midst. Hence we meet everywhere with warriors and saints, who were believed to be deities in disguise. History and mythology consequently mix together in such a confused tangle, that it is often impossible to tell where the adventures of the king or warrior end, and those of the god begin.

The Vishnuites split into two principal sects. One is more devoted to Vishnu in the form of Rama; the other believes that his eighth incarnation in the form of Crishna was the most perfect and the most efficacious. Both were princes, and holy men, and great workers of miracles. The advent of Vishnu under the name of Crishna is the most poetic and the most remarkable. The Bramins date it before the Cali Yug; that is, more than five thousand years ago. The following account is abridged from the Bhagavat Geeta, which Sir William Jones supposes to have been written one thousand four hundred and fifty-one years before the birth of Christ:—

The earth was so oppressed by the dominion of Evil Spirits, that she could no longer endure their injustice. Assuming the form of a cow, she appeared before Indra, and complained of her wrongs. He referred her to Siva, who, in his turn, sent her to Vishnu. Vishnu escorted her to the Temple of Brahma the Invisible, on the borders of the Milky Sea. There the oracle commanded him to become a man, and be born in the city of Matra, under the name of Crishna. Vishnu replied: "I will become incarnate in the house of Yadu, and will issue forth to mortal birth from the womb of Devaci. It is time I should display my power, and relieve the oppressed earth from its load."

Devaci was the sister of a tyrannical king named Cansa, whose oppressions are said to have caused the first emigration to Egypt. He married her to a Bramin named Vasudeva, descended from the Yadus, or Yadavas, the oldest and noblest line in India. Returning from the wedding, Cansa heard a prophetic voice declare, "The eighth son of Devaci is destined to be thy destroyer." Alarmed at this omen, he put his sister and her husband into a strong prison guarded by seven iron doors, and whenever a son was born to them he caused him to be immediately destroyed. When Devaci became pregnant the eighth time, her countenance was radiant with celestial light. Brahma and Siva, with a host of attendant spirits, came to her and sang: "In thy delivery, O favoured among women, all nature shall have cause to exult. How ardently we long to behold that face for the sake of which we have coursed round three worlds!" The seasons preceding this marvellous birth were uncommonly regular and genial, the planets were unusually brilliant, strong winds were hushed, rivers glided tranquilly, and the virtuous experienced extraordinary delights. In the month Bhadron, at deep midnight, when the Sustainer of All was about to be born, the clouds emitted low musical sounds, and poured down a rain of flowers. When the celestial infant appeared, a chorus of heavenly Spirits saluted him with hymns. The whole room was illuminated by his light, and the countenances of his father and mother emitted rays of glory. Their understandings were opened, they knew him to be the Preserver of the World, and began to worship him. But he soon closed their minds, so that they thought he was merely a human child born unto them. While his mother was weeping over him, and lamenting the cruel decrees of her tyrannical brother, a voice was distinctly heard, saying: "Son of Yadu, carry this child to Gokul, on the other side of the river Jumna, to Nanda, whose wife has just given birth to a daughter. Leave him, and bring the girl hither." Vasudeva inquired: "How is that possible in a prison so closely guarded?" The voice replied:



"The doors will open of themselves, and I have caused a deep sleep to fall upon all the guards." Then Vasudeva took the child in his arms, the doors opened, and he passed out. Being in the rainy season, the current of the river Jumna was rapid and strong; but when the divine child approached, the waters rose up to kiss his feet, then respectfully retired on either side and left a dry pathway. The great hooded serpent of Vishnu held her head over him all the way, instead of an umbrella. When they arrived at Nanda's house, the door opened of itself. He and his wife were asleep. He took their infant daughter in his arms, and left the boy with them. When he returned, the river again separated to offer him free passage, the prison gates opened, the guards were all asleep, and he delivered the girl to his wife. Representations of this flight with the babe at midnight are sculptured on the walls of ancient Hindoo temples.

Nanda, who had long wished for a son, was delighted when he woke and found a beautiful boy sleeping by the side of his wife. He named him Crishna, in allusion to his colour, which was blueish black. Even in infancy he attracted attention by the miracles he performed. His foster-father had many herds, which Crishna assisted in tending. On one occasion, a great serpent poisoned the river, so that the cows and the shepherd-boys, who drank of the water, lay dead on the banks in great numbers. Crishna merely looked on them with an eye of divine mercy, and they all came to life, and rose up. Afterward he destroyed the great serpent. On another occasion the cattle and the shepherd-boys were all stolen and carried off. Crishna, by a simple exertion of his will, created others so exactly like them, that no one could discern a difference. Once, when the dairy-maids complained to his foster-mother that he had been eating the curds and drinking the milk, he opened his mouth and asked her to see if there were any curds there. She looked in, and, to her great astonishment, beheld the whole universe in the plenitude of its magnificence. [This alludes to their doctrine



that the Supreme Being contains the whole universe in himself.]

Once, seeing a festival in preparation, he inquired the reason. They told him it was in honour of Indra, by whose propitiation rain would descend to revive vegetables, and refresh man and beast. He asked whether any rain fell in those places where men did not propitiate Indra; and he received no answer. He then told them that rain fell by the power of an Almighty Being, of whom Indra himself stood in need. That good and evil, pleasure and pain, were the ordained lot of each individual, and Indra had nothing to do with it. He therefore proposed that a portion of the offerings prepared for the festival should be given to the Bramins, another portion to the cows, and the remainder distributed among the poor. This proposal was greatly admired by wise men in the assembly, but those of more narrow views deemed it improper that a child should presume to interfere with the affairs of the gods. However, they were in the end governed by his advice. Indra, displeased at the loss of his offerings, sent a deluge of rain. Crishna told the people to take refuge on a mountain, with their flocks and herds. When they had done so, he lifted the mountain on his little finger and held it above the storm, with as much ease as if it had been a lotus-blossom.

In the performance of these miracles, he assumed no other appearance than the infantine one, which belonged to him when he took on himself the veil of mortality. He wore no panoply but the sacred shell, and the innocence of a little child. Men, seeing the wonders he performed, told Nanda he could not possibly be his son; that he must be the Great Being, who is exempt from birth and death. He replied: "Yes, it must indeed be so. When I named him Crishna, on account of his colour, the priest told me he must be the God, who had taken different bodies, red, white, yellow, and black, in his various incarnations, and now he had assumed a black colour again, since in black all colours are absorbed."

When Indra discovered who was disguised in the form of that wonderful child, he was abashed at his own presumption, and threw himself at his feet with most submissive apologies. Crishna readily forgave him. The Ginarrers and Gandharvas, who accompanied Indra, threw down a shower of blossoms; new leaves burst forth from trees and shrubs; the waters of the river rose up with transport, and sprinkled rubies and diamonds.

Meanwhile, a prophetic voice had told Cansa: "The boy who is destined to destroy thee is born, and is now living." As soon as he heard that, he gave orders that all the male children throughout his kingdom should be put to death. Among the sculptures in the cave-temple at Elephanta, is a conspicuous figure with a drawn sword, surrounded by slaughtered infants. It is supposed to allude to this part of Crishna's history. All methods taken to destroy the divine child proved ineffectual. The messenger, whom the king sent to kill him, found him near the river. As he approached, he saw reflected in the water an image of Crishna radiant in celestial beauty, and innumerable Spirits standing before him, with their hands joined in adoration. He immediately did the same, and thus united in their worship of the incarnate god: "O thou Supreme One! thy essence is inscrutable, but its shadow is in all bodies, like the image of the sun reflected in vases of water. If the vase be broken, where is the image? Yet the sun is neither increased by the vases, or diminished by their fracture. In like manner, thou art all in all. The understanding of finite man cannot reach thy almighty power. Well may it escape the sight of myself and other mortals, who are a prey to earthly desires, when the mightiest spirits, even Brahma and Siva, are lost in astonishment. I, who know nothing, fly to thee for protection. Show mercy upon me, and enable me to see and know thee." When Crishna asked why he seemed so amazed, he replied: "O Sovereign Lord, thou well knowest what I have seen in the water." The divine child merely smiled, and passed on.

He knew the secret thoughts of all who came into his presence, and could at once detect Evil Spirits under any disguise they might assume. A terrible bull with fiery eyes was sent to destroy him. But he said calmly: "I know what Evil Spirit thou art in that disguise. If any disease makes thee thus frantic, I will cure thee." The furious beast rushed forward to kill him, but Crishna seized him and twisted his enormous head from his body. At another time he was swallowed by a crocodile, but he burned him so intolerably, that the ravenous animal threw him up, and cast him from his mouth unhurt.

He is described as a youth of perfect beauty; with breast broad and high, waist of elegant proportions, graceful limbs, a foot like the lotus-blossom, smooth skin, ruby lips, and a smile of ineffable sweetness. Women left their work unfinished, to run and gaze after him, as he passed by. In the family of Nanda, he had for companions young dairy-maids, called Gopias. In early youth, he selected as favourites nine of these damsels, with whom he spent his leisure hours in dancing and playing on the flute. Cama, God of Love, found no greater joy than spending his nights with them in dance and song. Crishna played so ravishingly, that the animals gathered round him, enchanted by his tones. In that beautiful season when earth resumes the green livery of spring, and the bow of heaven beams benediction on the human race, he peculiarly delighted in music. One delightful evening, when a warm sweet air breathed around, when the moon was shining in meridian splendour, and Spirits in honour of it clothed themselves in rose-coloured robes, with chains of pearl and rubies, he wandered forth playing on his flute. The waters stood still to hear him, hungry calves let their mother's milk drop on the ground while they listened, and the birds lost all power over their wings. The Gopias all left their occupations to hurry after those fascinating sounds. He advised them to return home, and not risk their comfort in this world and happiness in the next, by neglect or ill conduct toward their husbands; since the

Vedas, which are the very words of Brahma, declare that a husband, however defective or criminal, is in the place of the Supreme to his wife. They replied that when frenzy seized the mind, all duties and all worldly motives were forgotten; that intoxicated as they were by the sound of his flute, it was in vain to preach to them duty to their husbands; that when he ordered them to leave him, their feet would not move, but if he called them toward him, they flew. So ardent and concentrated was their affection, that their souls became illuminated, and they comprehended who Crishna was. They told him they well knew he was the Supreme Being, and that whoever would be united to him must renounce all other connections, as they did; that he might separate himself from them corporeally, if he would, but he could not escape from their hearts and minds, which would remain forever fixed on him. Perceiving them thus sincerely inflamed, and hurried away from themselves by the ardour of desire, he took each of them in his arms, and treated them all with equal tenderness. All the transport and happiness to be found in the world were in the hearts of the Gopias. They exclaimed: "O happy trees of this wood, under whose thick shade Crishna delights to slumber. Honoured above all animals are these, which the Almighty himself leads to pasture. Happy above all is the flute, which rests forever on his divine lip, from which he produces those heavenly sounds that steal away the souls of Sooras and Assooras. How blest are we, whom he condescends to love!" When Crishna promised always to continue his kindness to them, they became elated with the happiness and elevation of the fourteen spheres of the universe. They all rose up, and taking hold of his hands began to dance. His form multiplied in proportion to the number of his partners, and he gave his hand to each. Every one believed he was close by her side, and all their eyes were directed toward him alone. If one became fatigued, she sat down, holding his hand and looking toward him, or stood with her arm round his neck, leaning on his shoulder



in the most graceful and affectionate manner. Brahma, Siva, and subordinate Deities came as spectators, and offered all manner of flowers. Many of the blossoms fell to the ground, from the bosoms of the dancers, and bees, attracted by their fragrance, swarmed around them. The listener who once came within sound of that flute, or heard the musical tinkling of the dancers' feet, was unable to depart, nor could the birds stir a wing. After a thousand sports, they all went to bathe, and renewed their caresses in the river Jumna. The enjoyment of Crishna with the Gopias, and of the Gopias with Crishna, is a mystery, and cannot be described.

Cansa heard the fame of this wonder-working youth, and tried various means to entice him to his palace, that he might employ him in some task sure to end in his destruction. Crishna always eluded his snares, till he knew the predestined time had arrived for him to kill the tyrant. He then quitted his pastoral life, and returned to the place of his birth. After conquering in all manner of perils, contrived by the jealousy of the king and the malignity of wicked Spirits, he at last attacked Cansa, tore the crown from his head, and dragged him a long way on the ground by his hair. While thus dragged along, the soul of the tyrant became liberated of the three worlds; for whether sleeping or waking, he had never, for one moment, been able to refrain from thinking of his predestined destroyer, and at the moment of death he had beatific visions of him; for whoever, constantly and sincerely, whether in love or enmity, bent his heart toward the Deity, incarnated as he was in that human form, was sure to obtain liberation.

When Crishna heard the lamentations of the king's wives and brothers, he pitied them, and advised them to strive for resignation to the unavoidable decrees of fate. Then he went to the place where his father and mother were imprisoned, fell at their feet, and said: "Be happy in the life of that son, for whose sake his earthly parents have suffered so much danger and distress." At that moment, they knew he was the Almighty, and worshipped him with



prayers and praises. When he perceived that they knew him to be the Universal Lord, while so much remained for him to fulfil as an avatar on this earth, he again plunged them into forgetfulness, so that they once more supposed him to be their son. As his youth had been passed among shepherds, they deemed it necessary to commence an education for him, suited to the caste of Cshatryas, or rajahs, to which he belonged. They accordingly procured a learned Bramin to teach him all the Vedas. To save appearances, he staid awhile with his tutor, though in reality he learned the whole circle of sciences in one day and one night. At parting with his teacher, he requested him to ask whatever boon he most desired. He replied: "Above all things, I desire to have my two dead sons restored to life." Crishna assured him it should be done. He descended to the abodes of departed souls, summoned the god of those regions, and demanded the two sons of his tutor. His commands were obeyed with profound submission. He restored the young men to life, and brought them to their father. He was constantly performing similar miracles of beneficence. He lulled tempests, cured lepers, and restored the old and crippled to youth and beauty. His mother having expressed a wish to see her infant sons, who had been murdered by command of their cruel uncle, he went to the regions of departed spirits, and brought them to her. As soon as she saw them, the milk began to flow in her breasts. When the babes had tasted of the milk, and Crishna had passed his hand over them, an eagle descended from above and bore them up to Paradise, in sight of all the people.

The Coros were enemies of the Yadavas, and persecuted them greatly. Crishna conquered them in a great battle, and placed the rightful prince on the throne. But though he fulfilled his destined mission in fighting against oppressors, his prevailing characteristics were benevolence and tenderness. His kindness was freely extended to all. If he visited a pious rajah, who offered him chains of gold and strings of finest pearl, he was often at the same mo-

ment in some humble shed with a devout Bramin, who was too poor to offer him anything but fruit and flowers. He gave no preference to one over the other, knowing that their religious merits were equal, though their external conditions were so very different.

It is said that Bhreegoo, a celebrated saint, wishing to test his divinity, kicked him, to see whether it would make him angry. Crishna stooped and examined his foot with the utmost tenderness. "This breast of mine is extremely hard," said he. "You surely must have hurt yourself." Bhreegoo, weeping with joy, exclaimed: "This must indeed be the true Lord of the three worlds."

To certain princes, who bowed low before him, he declared that he took more pleasure in repentant sinners, than he did in stainless devotees, who had passed their whole lives in austerity and prayer.

In all the concerns of life, he strictly obeyed the injunctions of the Vedas. Morning, noon, and evening, he performed the prescribed ablutions and prayers. He washed the feet of Bramins with all humility, and distributed among them cows with gilded horns. He neglected none of the purifications appointed for actions proper to human nature, which are every day committed. If it be asked how that divine essence could have any need of purification, the answer is, that it was by reason of his material form. He took part in the public business of the Yadavas, and when he sat in council with them, it would be degrading to that assembly to compare it to the moon and stars shining in midnight glory. After performing his public and private duties, musicians and singers were introduced, and every kind of innocent and elegant diversion beguiled the remaining hours of the day.

He lived in the midst of beauty and magnificence. His carriage, studded with jewels, glittered like the sun; and when he rode forth, women mounted on the roofs of the houses, to gaze after it as long as it was possible. The father-in-law of Cansa had solemnly sworn to revenge his death, and he accordingly attacked the city of Matra.

Crishna, to save the inhabitants from all danger, called up an island from the ocean, and transported them all thither. By his command, Visvakarma, the architect of his celestial Paradise, constructed a wonderful city called Dwarka. The walls were of gold, and the pavements glittered with precious stones. The houses were pure crystal, supported by pillars of coral, with canopies of golden cloth, festooned with strings of pearl. The apartments were illuminated with resplendent rubies, and over the roofs floated clouds of fragrant smoke, from the constant burning of aromatics. Numerous temples towered toward the sky, and incense from their altars perfumed the whole atmosphere. Learned Bramins were everywhere chanting the Vedas, like intoxicated bees buzzing round aromatic Nenuphar. Peacocks sported among the trees, and nightingales sung. In the garden was a river, whose banks were all gold and jewels. It appeared red, from the reflection of the rubies, but it was perfectly white. It was the Water of Life. In the most splendid of the palaces lived his first wife Rakmini, who was an incarnation of his celestial consort Lacshmi. In this city dwelt Crishna, with his sixteen thousand wives, like lightning in a cloud. Beautiful children played in the courts, and graceful slave-girls attended on their mistresses. When Nareda, god of music, visited this Paradise, Crishna rose from his seat and stepped forward to welcome him. He caused water to be brought, and himself washed the feet of his guest, pouring the remainder of the water on his own head. Nareda was oppressed by such marks of distinction, and replied reverently: "If it be thy august will to perform these services for me, it is as a father and mother perform services for their children, out of their own voluntary good will. No one can measure thy mercy and benevolence. Thy avatar is for the purpose of protecting the good and punishing the wicked. Men, who are buried in the pit of their passions, have no possibility of escape from their control, except by thy mercy in consenting to be born into this transient world." Having curiosity to know whether Crishna lived with his

sixteen thousand wives in rotation, or was always present with each of them, he resolved to take the first opportunity of going into their various houses. In one, he found Crishna at a banquet; in another, listening to the Pouranas; in another, he had set the women to quarrelling, and amused himself with looking on; in another, he was listening to the songs of beautiful slave-girls; in another, giving orders for digging a well; in another, distributing milch cows to the poor. Go as quickly as he would, he found Crishna everywhere present. Each of his wives thought he preferred no one to herself, and that he wished for no other. [This is probably an allegorical allusion to the intimate union of Deity with multifarious forms of the universe.]

After the Coros were conquered, the rightful prince of the Yadavas reigned thirty-six years in peace and prosperity. Then came calamities and bad omens of every kind. A black circle surrounded the moon, and the sun was darkened at noonday; the sky rained fire and ashes; those animals which it was reckoned fortunate to meet on the right hand were met on the left; flames burned dusky and livid; demons carried away the ornaments of the women and the weapons of the men, and no one could impede them; at sunrise and sunset, thousands of figures were seen skirmishing in the air; Crishna's horses took fright, and ran away with his carriage into the pathless regions of the atmosphere, far beyond the ken of mortals; Spirits hovered in the air, wailing, and crying out, "Arise ye and flee!" Crishna knew that these prodigies foreboded the extinction of the Yadavas, and his own exit from his material form. He remembered the prophecy concerning himself, "O Crishna, take care of the sole of thy foot." He seated himself in a jungle, full of melancholy thoughts, and summoned all his force, mental and corporeal, while his spirit stood ready to depart. A hunter, seeing him there, mistook him for an animal, and discharged an arrow, which pierced him in the foot. Immediately a great light enveloped the earth, and illumined



the whole expanse of heaven. Crishna, attended by Celestial Spirits, and luminous as on that night when he was born in the house of Vasudeva, pursued, by his own light, the journey between earth and heaven, to the bright Paradise whence he had descended. All men saw him, and exclaimed, "Lo, Crishna's soul ascends its native skies!"

One of the titles of Crishna is "Pardoner of Sins;" another is "Liberator from the Serpent of Death." In allusion to this last title, and likewise to his death-wound in the foot, the image of Crishna is sculptured in their ancient temples, sometimes wreathed in the folds of a serpent, that is biting his foot, sometimes treading victoriously on the head of a serpent.

Hindoo theology is everywhere intimately connected with astronomy. Each planet had its presiding Spirit, supposed to be interested in the affairs of men, and therefore to be propitiated by prayers and offerings. In the following prayer, Crishna is addressed as the Spirit of the Sun: "Be auspicious to my lays, O Crishna, thou only god of the seven heavens, who swayest the universe through the immensity of space and matter. O universal and resplendent Sun! Thou mighty governor of the heavens; thou sovereign regulator of the connected whole; thou sole and universal deity of mankind; thou gracious and supreme Spirit; my noblest and most happy inspiration is thy praise and glory. Thy power I will praise, for thou art my sovereign Lord, whose bright image continually forces itself on my attentive, eager imagination. Thou art the Being to whom heroes pray in perils of war; nor are their supplications vain, when thus they pray; whether it be when thou illuminest the eastern region with thy orient light, when in thy meridian splendour, or when thou majestically descendest in the west."

All the Hindoo avatars are painted bluish-black, or dark azure. In allusion to Crishna's being the Spirit of the Sun, his colour is called "the brilliant pupil of the eye of the universe." He is represented as more splendidly dressed than any of the avatars. He wears robes of golden yel-



low, with a coronet on his head, containing a jewel of inestimable value. He is adorned with garlands of flowers, and rich strings of pearls. He is the favourite deity of Hindoo women, who are enamoured with the accounts of his beauty and tenderness of heart. Throughout India, he is worshipped with enthusiastic devotion. He is believed to have been Vishnu himself, perfectly and entirely incarnated in a human form; whereas other avatars were only endowed with portions of his divinity. They ascribe to him all the wisdom and power of the Supreme Creator and Ruler of the Universe.

In the Bhagavat Geeta, Crishna is represented as saying to his friend and disciple Arjun: "Both thou and I have passed through many births. Mine are known unto me, but thou knowest not of thine. Although I am not in my nature subject to birth or decay, and am the Lord of all created beings, yet having command over my own nature, I am made evident by my own power; and as often as there is a decline of virtue, and an insurrection of vice and injustice in the world, I make myself evident. Thus I appear from age to age, for the preservation of the just, the destruction of the wicked, and the establishment of virtue."

"I am the creation and the dissolution of the whole universe. There is nothing greater than I. All things hang on me, even as precious gems on a string. I am moisture in the water, light in the sun and moon, inspiration in the Vedas, sound in the atmosphere, fragrance in the earth, human nature in mankind, glory in the source of light. I am all things; I am Life. I am the eternal seed of all nature. I am the understanding of the wise, the glory of the great, the strength of the strong. I am free from lust and anger; and in animals I am desire, regulated by moral fitness."

"He who adores with sincere faith any object whatsoever, infallibly obtains from me the object of his belief. Firm in his faith, he seeks by his own means such or such a favour, and I grant the object of his desires. Worshippers

of the inferior Deities are with the inferior Deities; worshippers of the souls of their ancestors are with the souls of their ancestors; they who sacrifice to Spirits are with those Spirits. But these fruits, sought by men but little endowed with science, are limited in their duration. Those who worship the inferior Deities with faith, worship me also; but not in the true manner. I enjoy their sacrifices. I am the Lord to whom return all the works of religion. But they do not know me according to the truth; therefore they fall back into the world of mortals. The ignorant believe me visible, whilst I am invisible. They do not know my superior, imperishable nature. I am animated with equal benevolence toward all beings. I know neither hatred nor predilection. But those who adore me devoutly are in me, and I in them. Even he who has led a bad life, if he adores me without adoring any other thing, is to be reputed virtuous. It is entirely accomplished. He will immediately have a just soul, and obtain eternal tranquillity. Have faith in me. No one who worships me can perish. Forgetting all other duties, address thyself to me as the only asylum. I will deliver thee from all sin."

The same book declares: "Crishna is at all times present everywhere; just as fire, though concealed, is always present in wood. Whoever is night and day thinking of him becomes exalted above all the three worlds. Whoever, at the moment of expiring, shall retain him in remembrance, will infallibly be thrice blessed."

Hindoo Sacred Writings abound with allusions to an age of innocence and bliss, long passed away, and prophesy an age of holiness and happiness, that will come at the end of all things. Strabo, the Greek geographer, records that a philosopher, named Onesicritus, was sent into India, by Alexander the Great, to learn the doctrines and mode of life of the hermit sages in that region. He found a Bramin, named Calanus, who taught him that in the beginning of the world, milk, wine, honey and oil flowed spontaneously from fountains, and peace and plenty reigned over all nature. But men having made bad use of this felicity,

the Creator deprived them of it, and condemned them to labour for subsistence.

In consequence of the disorders produced by Evil Spirits, leagued with men, Vishnu was obliged to appear on earth, at various epochs, in different forms; as a fish, a lion, a dwarf, and holy sages among men. His eighth incarnation in Crishna was the most perfect that has yet been; but more glorious still will be his tenth and last avatar. Their Sacred Books declare that in the last days, when the fixed stars have all apparently returned to the point whence they started, at the beginning of all things, in the month Scorpio, Vishnu will appear among mortals, in the form of an armed warrior, riding a winged white horse. In one hand, he will carry a scimeter, "blazing like a comet," to destroy all the impure, who shall then dwell on the face of the earth. In the other hand, he will carry a large shining ring, to signify that the great circle of Yugs, or Ages, is completed, and that the end has come. At his approach, the sun and moon will be darkened, the earth will tremble, and the stars fall from the firmament. The great serpent Seshanaga will pour forth flames from his thousand mouths, which will set the universe on fire, consume the spheres, and all living creatures. The white horse is represented as standing with one foot raised. When he stamps it upon the earth, it is predicted that the dissolution of nature will take place. Some Oriental scholars consider this as an astronomical allegory; a white horse being the universal symbol of the sun among ancient nations.

A Sacred Book, called the Barta Shastra, contains the following prophecy: "At the end of the Cali Yug, a Bramin will be born, who will understand the Divine Writings, and all the sciences, without spending any more time to learn them than is sufficient to pronounce a single word. They will give him a name signifying He who excellently understands all things. By conversing with those of his own race, he will purge the earth of sinners; a thing impossible to any other than himself. He will cause justice and truth to reign everywhere, and will subject the uni-

verse to the Bramins. When he becomes old, he will retire into the desert and suffer penance. He will confirm the Bramins in virtue and truth, and keep the four castes within the bounds prescribed by Sacred Laws. Then will the First Age return again. All the virtues will march in the train of truth; and the Light of the Divine Writings will be diffused everywhere. The earth will be inebriated with prosperity and gladness, and all people enjoy ineffable delights."

So strongly is this hope of a blissful future impressed on the minds of the people, that they commemorate the prophecy by a festival, during which they sacrifice a sheep, and repeat, with a loud voice: "When will the Helper come? When will the Deliverer appear?"

The more spiritual portion of the Vedas represent absorption in God as the great end and aim of all human exertions; and this absorption is to be attained by pure life, devout contemplation, and a complete withdrawal of the senses from all outward things. It attaches little value to works in themselves, and none at all, unless performed with purity of intention, and a heart devoted to God.

But the less spiritual portion of the Vedas prescribe many works and ceremonies, and promises appropriate rewards in Paradise for each; though it represents as unwise those who prefer such rewards to the eternal beatitude gained by pious sages. It is said:—"For a spirit self-interested as thine, there is no other means of salvation than the observance of rites. Continue to practise them as long as you feel a desire to enjoy the rewards they can procure. It is the way to obtain the recompense you expect for your works."

These two aspects of the Vedas produced theological schools of opposite tendency. The word *karma*, in the signification of which they include *words* and *thoughts* as well as *works of the body*, has given rise to endless disputations. A sect founded by Djaimini is called Purva; sometimes Karma Mimansa, or Investigators of the doctrine of Works, because they occupy themselves much with prov-



ing, both from reason and the Vedas, the efficacy of the works and ceremonies of religion. Their teachers define with great exactness how these works ought to be performed, and what degree of reward must follow each, by inevitable necessity. They present religion like a sum in arithmetic; so many merits subtracted from so many faults, and so much of punishment still remains due. This sect not only allows the killing of animals for food, but prescribes it, provided a portion be first offered to the gods. They elevate the worship of the symbolical deities to great importance, and thus express the popular tendency to Polytheism, or the worship of many distinct gods, rather than Pantheism, or the worship of all things in One God. Some of this sect consider works of expiation as efficacious only in cases of involuntary sins; others think the testimony of the Vedas prove them to be effectual in case of those that are voluntary.

An extreme reaction from this tendency to overvalue works, and overload religion with ceremonies, exists in the mystical sect called Vedantins, said to be founded by Vyasa, collector of the Vedas. In common with all Hindoos, they prescribe penances as aids to holiness, such as painful postures, holding the breath while repeating Om, &c. But they discountenance those terrible bodily inflictions, to which the popular mind of Hindostan is so exceedingly prone, and dwell more on the force of will, by which a holy man subdues his passions and directs his thoughts. They represent the worship of the symbolical deities as useful for those who cannot rise above it; but speak almost disdainfully of those who consider pleasure and power, and the joys of Paradise, a desirable recompense for their multitude of works. Their favourite theme is the surpassing excellence and supreme beatitude of that state of absorption, in which the soul of man floats serenely above all desire for reward, all reliance upon works, all necessity of instruction from the Vedas.

This spiritual reaction was inevitably produced by the popular tendency to bury religious feeling under a mass of



mechanical ceremonies; and everywhere there is a class of minds ready to carry principles to an extreme result. The Vedantins declared works insufficient for salvation; and straightway other teachers arose, who pronounced works not only insufficient, but pernicious; real obstacles in the way of holiness, and therefore to be utterly neglected and despised by all true saints. Endless were the debates on this question of faith and works. Traces of them are everywhere conspicuous in their sacred literature. "It is necessary to act," says the author of the Bhagavat Geeta, "because otherwise the body could not be nourished. It is necessary to act, because God, in creating the world, has arranged it in such a manner that beings reciprocally subsist by their works and actions. But he who acts without regard to reward, without any other motive than duty, without any end in view but God, he is the perfect man." "The saint, who has purified his soul, who has subdued his senses, whose soul is The Soul of All Beings, is not sullied by the practice of works. He never imagines it is himself who acts. In seeing, hearing, touching, breathing, eating, walking, sleeping, talking, in opening his eyes, or in shutting them, he says to himself, 'These are the senses, not myself, which are occupied with external things.' He attributes his works to God, and can thus act without stain, as the leaf of the lotus is not stained by the water-drops that fall upon it. In renouncing the fruit of works, he obtains tranquillity."

The sects above mentioned are considered orthodox, because they all acknowledge themselves bound by the Vedas, and each strives to sustain its position by texts thence derived. But many causes were at work to give birth to heretical opinions. In the first place, the Holy Books themselves declared that man might arrive at a state of holiness, in which perpetual inward revelations rendered the Vedas unnecessary; and the Vedantins had spread abroad the idea by reiterated assertions. In the next place, rational investigations and philosophical theories are always going on, more or less openly, by the side of theo-

logical speculations. But stronger than both these causes was an increasing jealousy and aversion to the hereditary priesthood. In the beginning, it is probable that any very holy hermit could become a priest: and when the office was first made hereditary, every Bramin was professedly a religious man, and felt bound to devote the latter part of his life to contemplation in the forest. But as the caste grew numerous and wealthy, many of them were not priests, and very few devoted their declining years to ascetic practices. Thus there were many Bramins who were not saints, and many renowned saints who were not allowed to become Bramins. The possession of almost unlimited authority had its usual effect to produce selfishness, arrogance, and oppression; and though there were always good and great men among the Bramins, many disgraced their high calling by utter abandonment to vice. Still, however degraded their characters, holy and learned men of the other high castes were bound to submit to their authority, and treat them with the utmost reverence. The populace, immersed in ignorance, and spell-bound by sacred traditions, considered disobedience to a Bramin as the sum total of sin, and thought no method so sure to open the Gates of Paradise for themselves as to bestow property on members of that consecrated caste. In such a state of things, any doctrine that undermined their exclusive privileges would of course find adherents.

A school of rationalists appeared in Hindostan, many centuries ago, called Sankhya; a word signifying Intelligence, Reason. They deny the authority of the Vedas; urging that the command to sacrifice animals cannot be of divine origin, because it is contrary to the laws of benevolence. They reject the doctrine of God everywhere present in Nature; and maintain that Nature, though an emanation from God, is an entirely distinct and independent principle, not created, but containing within herself the laws that regulate all her motions. This theory of two principles, God and Nature, is called by philosophers Dualism.

They hold the common opinion that true holiness and happiness are to be obtained only by withdrawing the senses entirely from external things; but they assert this can be accomplished by reason, self-control, and contemplation, without aid from the Vedas. They do not deny the existence of subordinate deities, but represent them as beings very inferior to human saints, who have freed themselves from nature by contemplation and virtue. These rationalists separate into two sects; one diverging from orthodox opinions more widely than the other. The ultra school do not believe in One Supreme Soul, but in a multitude of souls, each enjoying independent existence. They say there is no other revelation than the wisdom of good men, which consists of souvenirs laid up by them in various progressive anterior existences. They believe the soul can raise itself above passion and imagination, by reason, experience, and the instruction of such sages. The more orthodox school place small value on this accumulated knowledge of wise men, as a means of becoming at one with God. They believe in a Supreme Soul, and think the human soul, by contemplation and self-renunciation, can attain such a state of mystical union therewith, that direct revelations are constantly received from the Divine Source. All souls tend to this state, and all souls can become God.

These views open the religious life to all castes, and strike directly at the priesthood; for if the Vedas are rejected, there is no more need of Bramins to explain them, or to perform the ceremonies they prescribe; every man can become his own priest.

It is obvious that from various sources the Hindoo mind early became familiar with the idea that holy men could arrive at a state of elevation transcending the gods. This led to the theory of divine incarnations in the human form; the next step was to worship saints as gods. This is done by the Djinists, or Jains. The word Djina is merely one of the numerous words applied to saints, to express their various degrees of holiness; but in process of time it was

appropriated to this sect only. They hold most of the orthodox opinions concerning God and the soul, but reject the Vedas, because they prescribe bloody sacrifices. They believe God and Nature to be one indivisible existence. By a law eternally inherent in this existence, it passes from activity to repose, alternately, like day and night. Active, it produces creation, without however being dependent on creation, in any way. The material world, which emanated thus, is subject to successive changes, though its essence never perishes. It is alternately destroyed and renovated; never by any exercise of divine will, but by an inherent necessity. The duration of a world is divided into six periods. We are in the fifth, which began six hundred and forty-three years before Christ. In each of these periods appear twenty-four saints, to reform and purify mortals. These saints are Spirits descended upon the earth. One named Vrischaba, whom they peculiarly revere, has many sacred titles; such as "Lord of All the Saints," "Supreme over Gods and Spirits." According to their traditions, he was a prince, who abdicated in favour of his son, retired into the forest, and became entirely absorbed in the Divine Being. They attribute to him four Sacred Books of their sect, called Yoga. They likewise regard with especial reverence the anchorite Sramana, who is said to have been absorbed in the Divine Essence, about six hundred years before the Christian era.

They opened the religious life to all castes, except Soodras; and the saints of their own sect were their priests. In old times, their hermits bound themselves by very rigorous vows, and oftentimes showed their indifference to the world by going naked. The statues of these saints in their temples are always without clothing. It is asserted that some of them never died, but gradually dissolved away into phantoms, and thus imperceptibly mixed with the Universal Soul. In later times, the religious among them are less strict. They merely promise to be poor, honest, chaste, truthful, and benevolent toward all crea-



tures. For this last trait the Jains are very remarkable. They offer no sacrifices except fruit, flowers, and incense. A prince of this sect allowed himself to be defeated, rather than march his army in the rainy season, when the fires of the camp would destroy insects then swarming. Another prince forbade printers, potters, and pressers of oil, to exercise their trades during four months of that season, when they must inevitably crush many insects.

For a long time they were much persecuted by the orthodox sects. In a contest between them and the adherents of the Bramins, some of the Jain priests and their most zealous disciples were ordered to be ground to death in oil-mills. Yet the same people who exercised this cruelty revered life in a bee, a bird, or a monkey, as a portion of the Central Soul! In 1367 the Jains obtained peace by a formal reconciliation with the Vishnuites, whose creed resembles theirs in many particulars. They employ the Bramins in their religious ceremonies, and are mostly quiet, industrious citizens.

They are divided into sects among themselves, and sometimes carry their opposition so far as to fight with each other when they meet in religious processions. Bishop Heber asked a Jain merchant what was the difference between his views and those of another sect. He coloured up to the eyes, and answered with bitterness: "As much as between Hindoos and Christians; as much as between Christians and Mahometans." But a Jain priest, who was present, said more calmly: "We worship the same God; but they are ignorant *how* to worship him."

The Buddhists are by far the most important sect that have appeared in India. They have points of similarity with the Jains, and some writers have confounded the two together. But the Jains have always persecuted the Buddhists with great bitterness. They had too much tenderness to press oil, for fear of crushing insects in the process, but they slaughtered fellow-beings without mercy, under the influence of theological hatred. The Buddhists worship Spiritual Intelligences descended on earth in the form of



saints; and the greatest of these is Bouddha Sakia Mouni, from whom they derive their name. The words *Bouddha* and *Mouni* both mean a Saint, or a holy Sage; thus his name is Sakia, and his titles are, the sage and the saint, the wise and the holy. European scholars suppose him to have been a great saint and reformer, who tried to restore the spiritual doctrines of the Vedas, and abolish distinctions of caste, including the priesthood. The popular belief is that he was an incarnation of a portion of Vishnu, and that he had previously appeared on earth, at various epochs, for the instruction and salvation of mankind. Mercury is reckoned among the beneficent planets in India, and the name given to it is Boodh, or Bouddha. The day consecrated to that luminary, corresponding to our Wednesday, is the holy day among worshippers of Bouddha. Some Hindoo writers say he was the planet Mercury, born of the Moon and the bright star Aldebaran. Perhaps this means that the presiding Spirit of Mercury was a ray from Vishnu, and that he occasionally descended to our earth, and took a human form. The date of his last birth, in the character of Bouddha Sakia, varies among different nations that have adopted his religion. In Cashmere they say he appeared only two hundred years later than Crishna, whose advent they place more than five thousand years back. According to Mongol records, he was born two thousand one hundred and thirty-four years before the Christian era; but the Chinese say it was one thousand twenty-nine years. In Ceylon, the era from which they date is the introduction of Buddhism into that island, six hundred and thirty-eight years before Christ; and this they mistake for the date of Sakia's birth. The learned generally give their verdict in favour of the Chinese date; from which the opinion of Sir William Jones varies only twenty-nine years. That the sect prevailed extensively in India, at a very remote period, is abundantly proved by numerous gigantic temples bearing marks of great antiquity. His statues, found in such edifices, give the same indication; for they represent him as a man buried in profound medi-

tation, with hair knotted all over his head, after the manner of hermits in very ancient times, before the custom of shaving the head was introduced. From this peculiarity, some travellers have mistaken him for an African. Colebrooke, the learned Sanscrit scholar, conjectures that the Buddhists were in existence before the great sects of Siva or Crishna. That they were sufficiently conspicuous to excite hostility before the Ramayana was written, is proved by the following extract from that ancient poem: "As an atheist fallen from the path of rectitude, as a thief, so is a Buddhist."

His mother Maia is said to have been a virgin, who conceived him from a ray of light. As Maia was one of the names for the Goddess of Illusions, this might have merely signified that he only appeared to be living in this world; that his mortal existence was an illusion to the senses. Tradition affirms that his mother was married to a rajah; and of course her son belonged to the same royal caste that Crishna did during his existence on earth. The advent of Bouddha is thus recorded: "It was at the close of the Dwapar Yug, that he who is omnipresent and everlastingly to be contemplated, the Supreme Being, the Eternal One, the Divinity worthy to be adored, appeared in this ocean of natural beings, with a portion of his divine nature." It is said that a marvellous light shone at his birth, and the Ganges rose and fell in a remarkable manner. The moment he was born, he stood upright, walked forward seven steps, pointed one hand upward and the other downward, and distinctly said, "No one in heaven, or on earth, deserves higher adoration than I." On a silver plate, found in a cave near Islamabad, was written a curious inscription concerning him. It states that a saint in the woods learned by inspiration that the ninth incarnation of Vishnu had just appeared in the house of the rajah of Cailas. He flew through the air to the place indicated, and said, "I came hither to see the new-born child." The instant he looked at him he declared that he was an avatar, and destined to introduce a new religion into the world.

To fulfil the requisitions of the law, Sakia was married at sixteen years of age. His parents bestowed upon him a maiden named Ha, whose father was one of the seven saints saved from the universal Deluge, in the miraculous ship sent by Vishnu. As soon as a son was born to him, he renounced his princely rank, and went to live as an anchorite in a wild forest, flourishing with noble trees and fragrant flowers, but infested with lions and tigers. Many stories are told of the austerities he practised there. His spiritual teacher having one day remarked that religious instructions took no root unless accompanied by mortifications and sufferings, he covered his body with thousands of matches, which he lighted; at another time, he drove thousands of sharp nails into his flesh; at another, he went into a fiery hot furnace. Having one day encountered a tiger and her young perishing with hunger, he offered himself to them for food; but the beast being too weak to eat him, he pierced his veins, that she might strengthen herself with his blood, and afterward allowed himself to be devoured by her. Once, his soul entered a fox, which was so extremely beautiful, that the king threatened his hunters with death if they did not bring him the skin of that remarkable creature. He therefore allowed himself to be caught, on condition that they would skin him alive, to save themselves from the crime of murder. They did so, and this gave him an opportunity to gratify his benevolence by feeding swarms of hungry insects, who immediately fastened on his raw flesh. It is recorded of him that he spent six years in continual silent contemplation, resisting manifold temptations sent to try him. During this time, five Holy Scriptures descended to him, he was endowed with the gift of prophecy, and could alter the course of nature whenever he chose.

His worshippers believe that the severe austerities he practised had a higher and more benevolent object than the attainment of perfect holiness and complete absorption for himself. He was a Heavenly Spirit, dwelling in regions of light and beauty, who, of his own free grace and

mercy, left Paradise, and came down to earth, because he was filled with compassion for the sins and miseries of mankind. He sought to lead them into better paths, and he took sufferings upon himself, that he might expiate their crimes, and mitigate the punishment they must inevitably undergo. Hindoos of all sects believe that every cause has a certain effect, which must follow it by inherent necessity; thus every sin must have its exact amount of suffering; what is endured in this world will be deducted from punishment in the next; and what one voluntarily endures for another will be placed to the account of him he wishes to benefit. For these reasons, Bouddha inflicted terrible penances upon himself. So great was his tenderness, that he even descended into the hells, to teach souls in bondage there, and was willing to suffer himself, to abridge their period of torment.

The renown of Bouddha's wisdom and holiness attracted many disciples, to whom he imparted his doctrines and precepts in the silent depths of the forest. There is a tradition that he taught, as a secret doctrine, to his most confidential disciples, that all things came from nothing, and would finally return to nothing. A charge of atheism has been founded on this. But some suppose the story was fabricated by his enemies the Bramins, while in reality he merely taught their own doctrine that after an immense interval of revolving ages, all things in the universe, even Brahma himself, would be absorbed in the original Source of Being; which Buddhists name The Void.

Before his departure from this world, he intrusted his disciple Mahakaya, a Bramin of Central India, with all his precepts and doctrines. At the age of seventy-nine years, Bouddha Sakia's whole nature attained to such complete absorption in the Divine Being, that he ascended to celestial regions without dying. They show marks on the rocks of a high mountain, believed to have been the last impression of his footsteps on this earth. By prayers in his name, his followers expect to receive the rewards



of Paradise, and finally to become one with him, as he became one with the Source of Life.

It is said his disciples composed five thousand volumes in honour of him. The titles bestowed upon him are innumerable; such as "Son of Maia," "The Benevolent One," "Lord of the Earth," "Dispenser of Grace," "Saviour of all Creatures," and "Lion of the Race of Sakia."

There is a tradition that a celebrated sage named Amara, prime minister to the king, and called "one of the nine jewels" of his court, recognized Bouddha to be an incarnation of Vishnu, and sought to propitiate him by superior service. He lived in the forest twelve years upon roots and wild fruit, and slept on the bare ground. He committed no sin, and devoted his whole soul to pious contemplation. One night, he heard a voice saying: "Ask whatever thou wilt." He replied: "Let me see thee in a vision." The voice answered: "How can there be visions in the Cali Yug? But the same benefit may be derived from seeing and worshipping the image of a god, that might be derived from seeing and worshipping the god himself." A vision of the image was revealed to him. He caused a likeness of it to be made, and worshipped it with perfume and incense, accompanied by the following prayer: "Reverence be unto thee, Lord of the earth! Reverence be unto thee, thou incarnation of the Eternal One, in the form of Bouddha! Reverence be unto thee, God of Mercy, who overcometh the sins of the Cali Yug! Reverence be unto thee, possessor of all things, ruler of the faculties, bestower of salvation! Thou art he who resteth upon the face of the Milky Sea, who reposeth on the serpent Seshanaga. Thou, who art celebrated by a thousand names, and under various forms, I adore thee in the shape of Bouddha! Be propitious, O Most High God!"

An inscription to that effect was found carved on the rocks in a wild and solitary part of Behar, not far from the Ganges. Its date corresponded to nine hundred and forty-nine years after our era.



The doctrines taught by Bouddha and his disciples bear a general resemblance to the Braminical religion, from which they sprung, but depart from them in several particulars calculated to have an important influence. M. Boehinger, a learned and discriminating French writer, says :—" Like all men who have given a new direction to the religious ideas of their cotemporaries, Sakia did not invent a system altogether new. He merely pronounced, strongly and clearly, that which many of his cotemporaries had obscurely felt. He made himself the representative of opposition to Braminism, which had for some time existed among them."

The Buddhists believe in One Absolute Existence, including both God and Nature. When they speak of Providence, they mean an intelligence inherent in Nature, by which her movements are regulated. Philosophers call this doctrine Naturalism. To avoid attaching any idea of form, or limit, to the original Source of Being, the Buddhists called him by a name signifying The Void, or Space. On this subtile question, they are, however, divided into several schools. Some call this Absolute Existence The Supreme Will, The Supreme Intelligence. They supposed him to have alternate states of activity and repose. When active, he produced creation ; not from any will to do so, but from inherent laws of development. Thus emanate successive worlds, all changeable, illusory, and unreal, and destined finally to return to The Void again. Spiritual existences are evolved in descending gradations down to man. Human beings may become so plunged in error and ignorance as finally to lose all power of perceiving what is good and true. From this low condition they could never be raised without the aid of Superior Intelligences. The Supreme cannot descend to their relief, for he is incapable of motion or change. But his first emanations, a high order of spiritual existences, charge themselves with this mission of salvation. They descend to the inferior worlds, even down into the lowest hells, to give wretched creatures an example of virtue, explain the

cause of their misery, and teach them how to attain supreme happiness. Such have been all the great saints they adore ; but such in a pre-eminent degree was Bouddha Sakia.

They believe the world has been successively destroyed by wind, water, and fire ; that its essence, which never dies, has been renewed in form, and will be again destroyed, to be renewed again. The degree of perfection of a world, be it more or less, depends on the moral character of those who inhabit it. In proportion as the beings of an inferior world are all saved and raised to superior worlds, that world disappears. Thus, after infinite ages, all return to the Supreme Essence, to reappear in new successive emanations. All this ascending and descending movement has its source in laws of inherent necessity. Hence religious Buddhists compassionate sinners, as beings impelled to crime by their unfortunate destiny.

It has been remarked that Hindoos considered themselves a pure and privileged race, set apart from other nations, and polluted by contact with them. But Bouddha Sakia and his disciples, having risen above the Vedas, rejected the limitation of castes in religious life. The road to saintship in this world was freely opened, through a course of devout contemplation, to all nations and all classes ; to foreigners or natives, Bramins or Soodras, young or old, men or women. Bramins naturally regarded this as a wicked and very dangerous innovation ; for it was contrary to the Sacred Books, and, if it prevailed extensively, must strike a powerful blow at the privileges of their consecrated order. When and how Buddhists came to have a separate priesthood of their own cannot be traced. The animosity of Bramins would naturally drive them to the expedient of having religious ceremonies performed by their own holiest men. These men were not holy by birth, like the Bramins, but had attained to sanctity by strict celibacy and other ascetic practices. By this process, it seems likely that celibacy of the clergy came to be established, as a mark of distinction between them and other

sects. This peculiarity would of course increase the abhorrence of Bramins, who regarded offspring as one of the greatest blessings, both temporal and spiritual. The Sacred Books strictly enjoined it on children, as a religious obligation, to offer stated prayers and sacrifices, to assist the souls of ancestors through stages of probation after death. Other castes might procure this advantage by paying for it; but Bramins alone were authorized to perform religious ceremonies. In a worldly point of view, the establishment of celibacy would also be a great misfortune; for their vast possessions and inviolable privileges would all be scattered, if they had no families to inherit them. No wonder the Bramins peculiarly detested a sect which thus struck at the root of hereditary priesthood. The more people manifested interest in their tidings of spiritual emancipation, the more were its messengers slandered and persecuted. The Pouranas charge them with denying the authority of Vedas and Shastras; condemning animal sacrifices; declaring it useless to worship the gods; not believing in transmigration, but teaching that the five elements of the body dissolved at death, never to reunite; that this life alone was worth caring for; that pleasure ought to be the chief aim; that worship, abstinence and charity were useless.

But bitter words and unjust charges were the smallest evils they had to endure. They were hunted like wild beasts. At one time, orders were issued to put to death all Buddhists and their families, even old men and infants, from the Himalaya mountains, on the northern frontier, to the bridge of Rama, at the southern extremity, near Ceylon. They lingered longest in Southern India, where the Bramins were not so supremely powerful as elsewhere. But Mahometans assisted in the relentless warfare, and in the ninth century Buddhists were expelled from every part of Hindostan. Zeal, stimulated by persecution, had impelled great numbers of them to wander abroad, centuries before, scattering seeds of doctrine as they went. This final expulsion sent forth a still greater swarm of mission-

aries to other nations. How extensively they propagated their religion in Eastern Asia will be seen in the chapter concerning Thibet and China.

The most remarkable modern sect among Hindoos is that of the Sikhs, or Seiks; founded by Nanac Shah, born in the year one thousand four hundred and sixty-nine of our era, and belonging to the noble caste of Cshatryas. When very young, he met with some devotees, who strongly impressed his mind with the idea that the worship of One Invisible God was alone worthy of wise men. Seized with an earnest desire for knowledge, he travelled through Hindostan, Persia, and Arabia, and visited Mecca and Medina. He became acquainted with the Mahometan mystics called Sufis, and was particularly attracted by the writings of one of them, named Cabik, who earnestly enjoined universal philanthropy and religious toleration. Imbued with these rational and benevolent ideas, Nanac Shah resolved to devote his life to the project of uniting Hindoos and Mahometans, on the common ground of a simple faith and purity of morals. He treated both religions with great respect, but in his own teachings dwelt solely on the worship of One God, and love to all mankind. He used to say: "Hundreds of thousands of Mahomets, millions of Brahmas and Vishnus, and hundreds of thousands of Ramas, stand before the throne of the Almighty, and they all die. God alone is immortal. He only is a good Hindoo who is just, and he only is a good Mahometan whose life is pure." The Fakirs, and the people, being accustomed to impute supernatural power to saints, called upon him for miracles. But he answered: "I can show none worthy of attention. A teacher of sacred truths needs no defence but the purity of his doctrines. The world may alter, but the Creator is unchangeable." He was a pure deist; that is, a believer in natural religion, who reverently found in God the cause of all things, and considered as unimportant the authority of written revelation, about which he everywhere saw men contending so violently. He died about 1540, and was buried at Kirti-



pur, where a relic of his dress is preserved in one of their temples, and exhibited to pilgrims.

His benevolent design of bringing Hindoos and Mahometans together on a common ground of toleration and benevolence was utterly defeated. One of his successors published the writings of Nanac, the first sacred book of the sect, under the title of A'di Grant'h. It attracted the attention and excited the jealousy of the Mahometan government, and they put to death the collector of these writings. His son roused the sect to vengeance, and changed the benevolent believers into fierce warriors, who thenceforth received the name of Seiks, or lions. Long and bloody wars ensued, and the Seiks at last retreated to the Punjab, where a Hindoo chief received them kindly. There they established a sort of independent state, in which they entirely abolished castes, and placed Soodras and Bramins on the same level. They always go armed, and to distinguish themselves forever from Mahometans and Hindoos, they wear a blue dress, and let their hair grow. The Mahometan government, determined to extirpate them, offered a price for their heads, and every one who could be taken was immediately put to death. It is said not one of them could be persuaded to abjure his religion to save his life. They now govern quite a large district in the north-west of Hindostan.

Among the numerous minor sects is one called Sauder, which means Worshippers of God. They are quiet, orderly citizens, mostly merchants and husbandmen. They adore but One Divine Being, to whom they offer only hymns. They abstain from wine, tobacco, and dancing, offer no violence to man or beast, and are enjoined to practise industry, secret almsgiving, and prayer.

In Hindostan, as elsewhere, there have always been classes of minds who doubted or disbelieved the popular forms of faith. Some learned Bramins of the present day smile at terrible descriptions of the hells, in their Sacred Books, as bugbears fit only for the ignorant. Even so far back as Crishna's time, he had occasion to declare: "There



are those who know not what it is to proceed in virtue, or recede from vice. They say the world is without beginning, without end, without a Creator."

The universal power of the religious sentiment is manifested in the immense labour and expense bestowed on places of worship in all ages and nations. Stupendous works of this kind remain as vestiges of ancient Hindostan. The sight of them fills the beholder with astonishment, especially when he reflects that they were produced by the persevering toil of an indolent people, whose favourite maxim is, "It is better to sit still than to walk, better to sleep than be awake, and death is best of all." The most remarkable are subterranean temples cut through the heart of mountains, inch by inch, in the solid rock.

On the island of Salsette, likewise called Kennery, near Bombay; are celebrated excavations of this description, capable of containing thousands of inhabitants. The largest temple is ninety feet long and thirty-eight wide, with a spacious portico, and a lofty, fluted, concave roof, which gives it a majestic appearance. Two rows of columns, thirty-four in number, form an area in the centre; the capitals of many of them are elephants' heads, others formed of lotus leaves and blossoms. On each side of the portico stands a colossal statue, and various groups of smaller figures face the entrance. This was consecrated to Bouddha, and contains manifold representations of him. His principal image, sitting cross-legged, with hair knotted all over his head, is surrounded with small sculptured figures in relief, probably intended to illustrate his history. There are two other temples nearly as large, numerous chapels, and apartments apparently intended for hermits; also benches, open courts, and tanks for rain-water, all hewn out of very hard stone, and ornamented with sculptures. There are some inscriptions on the walls, but the characters bear no resemblance to any of the various alphabets now used in India. It is a language lost to the memory of man, and has not yet been deciphered. In another grotto temple between Bombay and Poonah, Boud-

dha is represented in the same attitude, with knotted hair, and surrounded by crowds of worshippers. Bramins ascribe its construction to Evil Spirits, called Rakshasas, and forbid any religious ceremony to be performed in it.

The island of Elephanta, not far from Salsette, takes its name from a huge stone elephant, in ruinous condition. The excavations here are truly wonderful, though the design and execution is more rude than the architecture at Salsette. The principal temple is itself one hundred and thirty feet in length, and the same in breadth; not including numerous apartments and chapels connected with it. The whole is hewn solely out of rock, and forms a complete grotto. Being lower than the great subterranean temple at Salsette, it has a more cavernous appearance. Twenty-six pillars and sixteen pilasters support the mass of rock which serves for a roof. At the entrance is a statue of the Hindoo Trinity. Brahma, serenely majestic, is in the centre; on one side is Vishnu, with a mild countenance; on the other is Siva, with a severe aspect, holding the serpent Cobra do Capello in one hand, pomegranates and lotus-blossoms in the other. This colossal image, thirteen feet high, almost fills the space from floor to roof. Ganesa, god of Wisdom, is near Brahma, with a style in his hand, ready for writing. Several gigantic figures are in attendance. Serpents are everywhere twisting about, enfolding the statues. The figures on the walls are in such bold relief, that they merely adhere to the rock by their backs. Among the numerous symbols, the Triangle is conspicuous. Hindoos attached mystic signification to its *three* sides, and generally placed it in their temples. It was often composed of lotus plants, with an Eye in the centre. Every thing indicates that this temple was dedicated to the worship of Siva. The Symbol of Generation is placed in one recess, and another is occupied by a huge image of his Sacred Bull. His own likeness occurs in every variety. In one place, he is represented half man and half woman; in another, he appears as the Destroyer, with a serpent, a sword, and a necklace of skulls. On the

richly-sculptured walls, he is represented as receiving his bride Parvati, from Cama, God of Love, and conducting her to his Paradise of Kailasa. They are accompanied by a numerous train of gods and goddesses. A great variety of small aerial beings hover round them in graceful attitudes, but generally with a heavy, sleepy look. The number of statues and sculptures in relief is immense. Adjoining the temple are two baths, with walls beautifully carved, the roof and cornice painted in mosaic patterns, the colours of which are still brilliant. Bramins confess that it is impossible to assign any date to these wonderful structures. All tradition of their origin is lost in the misty past. Every thing proves their antiquity to be exceedingly great. The rock is of clay-porphry, one of the very hardest species of stone. It is supposed that it could not have been cut without the aid of a peculiar kind of steel, called Wudz, for which India was celebrated, even in ancient times. Yet this material, apparently indestructible, is yielding under the slow pressure of ages. Many of the sculptures are so dissolved by action of the atmosphere, that it is difficult to trace their forms. What a long lapse of time it must have taken to corrode such a flinty material!

"At Carli," says Bishop Heber, "is another remarkable cave hewn in a precipice. The apartments were evidently intended for hermits, and some of them are ornamented with great beauty. The entrance to the temple is under a noble arch. Within the portico are alto-relievo figures of colossal elephants; heads, tusks, and trunks very boldly projecting from the wall. On each side of them is a Mahout, or driver, very well carved, and a houdah with two persons seated in it. The screens on each side the door are covered with alto-relievos of men and women, whom the Hindoos explain to be religious enthusiasts, attendants on the deity. The columns inside are carved with singular beauty. Each of the capitals consists of a large cap, like a bell, finely carved, and surmounted by two elephants, with their trunks intertwined, each carrying a man and

woman on their backs. These are likewise explained to be saints." The image of Bouddha, surrounded by worshippers, occurs in many places in this grotto, consequently Bramins say it was made by Evil Spirits. There are numerous inscriptions in unknown characters.

But the most marvellous of all grotto temples are those at Ellora, almost in the exact centre of India, near Deogur, which signifies The Holy Mountain. These excavations are hewn within a chain of mountains, embracing a circuit of six miles, arranged in horse-shoe form, and principally composed of very hard red granite. Here are a series of temples cut in rock, some of them two and even three stories high. The largest takes its name from Siva's Paradise, called Kailasa. It is a hundred feet high, and a hundred and forty-two feet long. On each side of the colonnades at the entrance are huge Sphinxes. A row of enormous elephants seem to sustain the superincumbent rock, and produce an imposing effect. There are many large temples, sometimes joining each other, sometimes separated by intervals, occupied with smaller temples. The extent and number of these extraordinary subterranean works can hardly be imagined. There are entire pyramidal temples, standing in open courts, peristyles, staircases, bridges, tanks, chapels, porticoes, obelisks, columns, and a great number of colossal statues, from ten to twelve feet high. On the right and left of the temples are chambers cut out of the rock, apparently for the convenience of priests belonging to the sanctuary. In some places, a large enclosure is surrounded by rows of columns, which sustain three galleries, one above another. An immense number of small grottoes seem to have been intended for the reception of thousands of pilgrims. On some of the walls are inscriptions in Sanscrit. Porticoes, columns and walls are everywhere covered with sculptures, many of them painted in bright colours, which still retain their brilliancy. Travellers declare that "the variety, richness and skill displayed in these ornaments surpass all description." Mr. Erskine says: "The first view of this desolate religious city is grand



and striking, but melancholy. The number and magnificence of the subterranean temples, the extent and loftiness of some, the endless diversity of sculpture in others, the variety of curious foliage, of minute tracery, highly wrought pillars, rich mythological designs, sacred shrines, and colossal statues, astonish and distract the mind. The empire, whose pride they must have been, has passed away, and left not a memorial behind it." The images of deities, either entire statues, or carved in bold relief, are counted by thousands. In fact this collection of temples seems intended to embrace the worship of them all. One is consecrated to Siva and Parvati, whose marriage festival is represented on the walls. Another is dedicated to Vishnu and his beautiful consort. Another contains a colossal statue of Indra seated on a recumbent elephant, and his wife Indrani on a recumbent lion. Rama and his wife Sita occupy another, whose walls are sculptured with his battles, described in the Ramayana. One of the temples is dedicated to Visvacarma, the celestial architect, said to have built Vishnu's palace in Paradise. The age of these stupendous structures is as difficult to be determined as those at Elephanta and Salsette, but the superior workmanship is supposed to indicate that they are less ancient. At whatever epoch they were commenced, it must have taken centuries to complete them. As the Bramins have no record of their origin, they say they were built before the Cali Yug, by Visvacarma himself, assisted by Vishnu.

Beside these subterranean excavations, there are wonderful structures, hewn in solid rock, above the surface of the earth. Such are the Seven Pagodas, very ancient monuments on the Coromandel coast, about thirty-five miles south of Madras. On the summit of a hill is a vast collection of temples and other buildings, columns, porticoes, and massive walls, almost entirely cut from the solid rock of the hill. As one approaches the coast, it has the appearance of a royal town. A large proportion of the buildings are covered by the sea, and may be seen far out under the water. It is conjectured that they were en-



gulfed by an earthquake, or some other terrible convulsion of nature. But it happened so long ago, that all recollection of the catastrophe is completely lost. The defacement and complete obliteration of some of the ornaments, by the operation of the atmosphere, likewise indicates great antiquity. The style and workmanship of some of the temples is said to be very grand and striking. There are many colossal images of deities, and of elephants, lions, and other animals connected with their history. Human figures like dwarfs are often placed in striking contrast with these huge creatures. The Symbol of Generation in some of the temples indicates that Siva was worshipped there. But the buildings are principally consecrated to Vishnu, especially to his incarnation in the form of Crishna. There is a colossal image of Vishnu sleeping on his thousand-headed snake covered with stars. In one place Crishna is represented enfolded by the Serpent of Death; in another, treading the Serpent under his feet, in allusion to his victory over death. He is also represented with the Nine Gopias dancing round him. In fact, whole scenes from the Mahabharata are sculptured on the walls. There are inscriptions over several of the statues, but they have not yet been deciphered. Tradition attributes these edifices and Cyclopean walls to kings of the race of Pandos, relatives of Crishna, and conspicuous in his history.

At Tanjore, in the south of India, is a very celebrated old temple, formed of massive hewn stones, piled one above another, without exterior decoration. It is in the form of a pyramid, two hundred feet high. The interior contains a large hall, lighted by lamps, where the Bramins assemble to perform certain religious ceremonies. The worship of Siva is indicated by the Symbol of Generation, and a colossal image of his Bull, called Nundi. It is formed of an entire block of brown porphyry, sixteen feet long, and twelve feet high. This animal was an object of religious worship, and his annual festival was observed with much pomp, during which the people went to his temple in procession, with flutes, cymbals, and garlands.

There is no determinate account when this structure was erected; and that circumstance, together with its primitive style of architecture, indicates high antiquity.

At Chalambbron, in the district of Tanjore, are a collection of sacred buildings, within a double enclosure. On each side is a magnificent gateway, formed of large blocks of stone, with pilasters thirty-two feet high, surmounted by a pyramid one hundred and fifty feet high, ornamented from top to bottom with sculptures. There are three chapels within a separate enclosure. One contains no religious symbol to indicate the deity to whom it was consecrated. One is dedicated to Vishnu, the other to Siva. A large tank occupies the centre of the area, with a colonnade and steps of stone, by which pilgrims descend into the holy water. On the right side is the largest temple, dedicated to Parvati, whose statue stands immediately facing the entrance. The portico is supported on six rows of columns, covered from top to bottom with carved figures. The sanctuary is lighted by numerous lamps, and before it stands an image of the Sacred Bull. The pilasters which form the entrance are connected by a chain, curiously carved from one piece of stone. On the other side of the tank is a chapel standing in the middle of an enormous hall, three hundred and sixty feet long, and two hundred and sixty broad. The flat roof is formed of immense blocks of stone laid horizontally, supported by upwards of one thousand pillars. Every part of this hall is ornamented with sculptures, representing scenes from the Mahabharata, and other Sacred Writings. These various halls and chapels were intended for the reception of statues, conveyed on huge cars, during some of the annual festivals. Three thousand Bramins were employed in the services of this sanctuary. The enormous expenses were defrayed by the vast concourse of pilgrims that flocked thither. One of the Pouranas record that these edifices were erected six hundred and seventeen years before our era; but portions are believed to be of later date. One of the large gate-

ways was rebuilt not many years ago, by a pious widow, at the cost of about seventy-five thousand dollars.

On the river Bunas is a magnificent temple to Crishna, called Nathdwara, or The Portal of God. It contains a statue of Crishna, said to have been in existence many ages, if not from the time when he was himself on earth. No terrible austerities are practised here, no animals sacrificed; but from all points of the compass are poured in offerings to this most popular incarnation of compassionate Vishnu. Some give large landed estates, others bestow rich coronets and costly jewels to adorn his image. Spices are sent from the Indian Isles, frankincense from Tartary, dried grapes from Persia, rich shawls from Cashmere, silks from Bengal, grain and fruit from the husbandmen, flowers from women and children. The presiding Bramin appoints consuls in all the great commercial cities to collect and transmit the donations of millions of votaries.

One of the oldest and most venerated temples is that of Jaga Nath, commonly called Juggernaut; one of the titles of Vishnu, signifying Lord of the World. It is at Orissa, on the northern extremity of the Coromandel coast. Europeans generally call it the Black Pagoda, because its dark colour, relieved by the sandy shore, makes it a conspicuous object to mariners a great distance off. It is a huge grotesque pyramid of granite blocks, three hundred and fifty feet high, crowned with copper balls and ornaments, flashing in the sunshine. It is covered with sculptures, among which is a large Sphinx, and many sexual emblems. An enormous Bull carved in granite projects from the front, which is toward the east. There is a tradition that when it was built it was ordained that distinctions of caste should be laid aside in the worship conducted there, and consequently that superiors and inferiors might eat together without pollution. This place is the scene of one of the most shocking festivals observed in modern times, as will be seen in succeeding pages.

On an island between the continent and Ceylon are three pagodas within one enclosure, with a gate forty feet

high. One temple is dedicated to Siva, another to Rama, another to Sita. The grand entrance to the largest is a truncated pyramid formed of rough blocks of stone. The exterior of these buildings is painted red, and adorned with a surprising amount of sculpture. Lord Valentia says: "They present a magnificent appearance, which we might in vain seek adequate language to describe." They are regarded as among the most ancient sanctuaries of the nation, and no foreigner is allowed to enter within the hallowed precincts.

In the vicinity of Kotah is the beautiful temple of Barolli, made of close-grained quartz-rock. Like many other of the old edifices, it is covered with a kind of stucco that hardens with time, and has the appearance of fine marble cement. It is in excellent preservation, though it bears marks of great age. The temple is not large, being only fifty-eight feet high, but it is remarkable for the profusion of sculpture with which every stone is covered, and for the ease and gracefulness of the figures. The gateway is adorned by two uncommonly fine statues of Siva and Parvati. Colonel Tod, who first visited the place, says there are some heads on the walls that would be no disgrace to the chisel of Canova. He says: "It would require the labour of several artists, for six months, to do anything like justice to the wonders of Barolli."

The Jains have many handsome temples. Bishop Heber thus describes one of them:—"The priest led us into a succession of six small rooms, with an altar at the end of each, over which was a large basso-relievo in marble. The last apartment contained twenty-five figures, all of men sitting cross-legged, one considerably larger than the rest, and represented as a negro.\* The priest said he was their God, and the other figures were the different bodies

\* This appearance was probably occasioned by hair twisted and knotted all over the head, according to the ancient fashion of hermits. The larger size of one of these figures indicated his superior wisdom; it being common among them to represent greatness of character by bigness.



he had assumed at different epochs, when he had become incarnated to instruct mankind. The progress made in the mysteries he taught entitle a man to worship in one or more of the successive apartments shown to us. In the centre of each room was a large tray with rice and ghee strongly perfumed, apparently as an offering; and in two of them were men seated on their heels on the floor, with hands folded as in prayer, or religious meditation." The Hindoo attitude of worship is with the folded hands raised to the forehead, or the face laid prostrate on the ground.

The following is a description of the private family chapel of a wealthy Hindoo:—"Though small, it was as rich as carving, painting and gilding could make it. The principal shrine was that of Siva, whose Emblem rose amid the darkness of the inner sanctuary, crowned with scarlet flowers, with lamps burning before it. Under the centre cupola was the Sacred Bull richly painted and gilded, in an attitude of adoration, likewise crowned with scarlet flowers. On the walls were paintings of gods and goddesses. Over all hung a large silver bell, suspended from the roof, like a chandelier."

"Hermitages in the rocks abound in every part of Hindostan. The situation is always picturesque, in the midst of water, and under the shade of trees. Many of them are on cliffs above the rivers, with bamboos hanging gracefully over the entrance. Inside is a low stone couch and a bracket for a lamp or idol. Some of them are elaborately carved."

A volume might be filled with descriptions of the numerous temples in Hindostan, but enough has been said to convey an idea of their grandeur, and of the religious zeal of the people. The most ancient are in the form of a pyramid. The great porch, or entrance, is a truncated pyramid, running out at the top into the shape of a half moon. The four sides face the cardinal points, and the front is toward the east. This form is prescribed by their Sacred Laws. The gigantic proportions, low massive pillars, and the deep shadows made by projections, produce a solemn

effect, while a feeling of vastness and infinity is impressed on the mind by the almost endless repetition of small figures, delicately carved. The sun, moon, bulls, rams, goats, serpents, and other representations of planets and constellations, abound everywhere, showing that astronomy was very intimately connected with their religious ideas. The interior of these old pyramidal temples is very awful; for light being excluded, the colossal statues of gods, often of frightful aspect, the huge serpents and enormous animals carved in stone, are fitfully revealed, in the midst of black shadows, by the wavering light of lamps or torches. Many of the grand old edifices, which stand above ground, seem destined to perish. The wild fig-tree sows its seed in the crevices, and being a sacred plant, it is deemed sinful either to root it out or cut off its branches. In the course of a few years its rapid growth makes the temples look extremely picturesque, but it eventually destroys them. Sometimes large slabs of stone, covered with sculptured images and emblems, become incorporated with the substance of the tree, and are completely encased in wood.

Upper India has been so ravaged by conquerors that few vestiges of its religious monuments remain. Many circumstances tend to prove that part of the country the cradle of Hindoo civilization; therefore, notwithstanding the vast antiquity of some of the structures still remaining, it is conjectured that they are not so ancient as were some that have disappeared.

In Hindostan, the temples are called Dewals. The term Pagoda, generally used by Europeans, is said to be a corruption of one of their words, signifying a Holy House. In all periods of their history the devotion of the people has led to the construction of new ones, and so it is at the present time. A Hindoo village is generally a mere collection of bamboo huts surrounding a Pagoda. Modern temples have lost the ancient character of grandeur. The ornaments are generally tawdry and the sculptures shocking specimens of deformity. Few of these buildings have more than three or four rooms, and some have only one,

large enough for the images, and a few attendants. On the occasion of great ceremonies, the crowd of people stand in an open area in front of the gates.

The Banian, or Indian Fig-tree, droops its branches, which take root as soon as they touch the ground. As they grow to amazing size, and apparently never decay, magnificent groves are formed, with agreeable vistas and cool recesses. The large green foliage is lively with squirrels and monkeys, and brilliant with parrots, peacocks, and scarlet figs. Sometimes,

“This pillared shade,  
High overarched, with echoing walks between,”

is spacious enough to shelter a thousand people. The Hindoos consider its far-stretching arms, its beneficent shadows, and its long life, emblematic of Deity, and they pay it almost divine honours. They plant it near their temples, and in villages where there are no temples, these groves are consecrated as places of worship. Here are placed blocks of black or white marble, or common upright stones, on which they pour oil for sacrifice; altars surmounted by vases containing consecrated plants; images of the sacred cow; and the emblem of Siva. To these groves worshippers bring their oblations of flowers, grain, fruit, incense, and spices. Here repose the high priests and their retinue, travelling with Oriental pageantry to take part in some grand religious festival; and here rests for a while the naked devotee, on his way to fulfil some vow; perhaps walking thousands of miles in silence, with only a parroquet for his companion.

It is common to build temples in close vicinity to these Banian forests; especially if there be a lake or river near by. To provide such places for the people is deemed an act of great piety, likely to ensure a long enjoyment of Paradise. A wealthy man, who was living at Alla Bhaug in 1834, presented to the public extensive groves and gardens, filled with fountains, flowers, fruit-trees, and aromatic shrubs, including a lake covered with a profusion

of lotus-blossoms. In the midst of all this beauty, he erected a temple, declaring that he did it "as an acceptable sacrifice to the benevolent deity, and a useful charity to his fellow creatures." As usual in their sacred buildings, the outer portion is for public worship, while the inner sanctuary is entered only by Bramins, who wash and dress the images, and adorn them with jewels and flowers, among which the lotus is always conspicuous. In front is a large tank of hewn stone for ablutions, with an obelisk at each corner, illuminated at festivals. The surrounding groves are lively with troops of musicians and dancing girls, devoted to the service of the temple.

The Hindoos have several holy cities, among which Benares is most esteemed. They call it "the Lotus of the world," founded not on common earth but on the point of Siva's trident. They consider the soil so blessed that whoever dies there, of whatever sect, is sure of salvation. Even if he has eaten beef, which they regard as the greatest of sins, he will be saved, provided he is charitable to poor Bramins and dies at Benares. Hindoo princes keep agents there to offer sacrifices for them. The very aged are carried thither and left near the Ganges, esteeming themselves most fortunate, if they can be carried away by the sacred stream, or devoured by its crocodiles. Wealthy men in the decline of life often go there to reside, to wash away their sins in the holy river, and secure rewards in a future existence by their benevolence to pious pilgrims. Bishop Heber speaks of "a man of vast fortune, who on his name-day (by which they mean the day on which his patron god is worshipped) always gave a large measure of rice and a rupee to every Bramin, and to every blind or lame person, who applied to him between sunrise and sunset. This person was reputed to be really kind and good; munificent from principle, not from ostentation." It may readily be imagined that under these circumstances Benares is a great place of resort for pious beggars. The number of temples is exceedingly great. "They are mostly small, and stuck like shrines in the angles of the streets,



and under the shadow of the lofty houses. Their forms, however, are not ungraceful, and many of them are entirely covered over with beautiful and elaborate carvings of flowers, animals, and palm branches, equalling in minuteness and richness the best specimens of Gothic or Grecian architecture. Bulls sacred to Siva, tame and familiar as mastiffs, walk lazily up and down, or lie across the narrow streets. Any blows given to rouse them must be of the gentlest kind, or the whole population would rise in wrath against the offender. Sacred monkeys, and the divine ape who conquered Ceylon for Rama, are numerous, clinging to all the roofs and projections of the temples, putting their hands into every fruiterer's or confectioner's shop, and snatching food from the children at their meals."

There was at Benares a famous pillar called Siva's Staff, a beautiful shaft of one stone, covered with exquisite carving. It originally stood inside a Hindoo temple; but when Mahometans conquered the country, they pulled down the temple and built a mosque over it. But pilgrims were still allowed to visit the ancient pillar, on condition of giving half their offerings to the Mahometans. Upon the occasion of some great religious festival, a quarrel arose in the street between two processions, one Mahometan and the other Hindoo. The Mahometans in their fury broke down Siva's Staff, and the Hindoos revenged themselves by burning a mosque. Not far off was a consecrated well, the waters of which were deemed peculiarly holy, and all Hindoo pilgrims were enjoined to drink of it and use it for ablution. The Mahometans, exasperated by the burning of their mosque, killed a cow, the most sacred of all animals, and threw her blood into this well. The Hindoos retaliated by throwing bacon into all the mosques; well knowing that pork was held in utter abomination by Mahometans, and deemed to pollute whatever it touches. A general fight ensued, which was finally quelled by the interference of British troops. Bishop Heber says: "After the tumult subsided, there was great mourning among the Hindoos. The holy city of Benares was profaned. The

blood of a cow had been mixed with the sacred water, and salvation could be obtained at Benares no longer. All the Bramins in the city, many thousands, went through the streets in melancholy procession, naked and fasting, with ashes on their heads; and for two or three days they refused to enter a house, or taste of food. The gaunt, squalid figures of the devotees, their unaffected anguish and dismay, and the screams of the women who surrounded them, formed a very impressive scene. The British magistrates tried their utmost to reason with and console them. At last, they concluded that Ganges was Ganges still, and that a succession of costly offerings in the temples might possibly wash out the stain the holy city had received. Over the prostrate pillar they mourned much. Tradition declared it had been twice as high, and had been gradually sinking into the ground; and there was a prophecy that when it became level to the earth, the religion of Brahma would come to an end, and all men be of one caste. Sorrowfully the Bramins gazed upon it, and said, 'Alas, Siva's Staff has its head level with the ground. We shall all be of one caste shortly. What will be our religion then?'"

The Coast of Orissa is perhaps the most important of the holy places of Hindostan. It is said that one million two hundred thousand pilgrims flock thither annually, to the great festival of Juggernaut. Immense numbers die of the hardships of long travel; of famine, from scarcity of provisions to feed such a multitude; by imprisonment, for non-payment of tribute to the Bramins; and by suicide, to expiate sins, or secure future rewards in Paradise. Miles of this country are covered with human bones, whitening in the sun. Juggernaut is represented by a gigantic wooden image, with black face, blood-red distended mouth, golden arms and diamond eyes. It is renewed every three years. The bones of Crishna are deposited within it; and when the Bramin takes them out, to transfer them to the new image, he shuts his eyes lest a sight of the holy relics should strike him dead. The image of Boloram, brother

of Juggernaut, is painted white, and his sister Shubudra yellow. A hundred lamps are continually burning before them, and fifty-six Bramins attend upon them. They present to them offerings of various kinds of food, bathe them six times a day with water, oil, and milk, and dress them each time in fresh clothes. At the great annual festival, these three images are gorgeously decorated, seated on thrones of nearly equal height, and placed in a huge car, sixty feet high, adorned with costly ornaments, and sculptured all over with sexual emblems. On each side are sixteen enormous wheels, which cut deep into the ground, as it slowly rolls along. It is preceded by elephants, dressed in crimson, bearing flags, and decorated with bells, that sound musically as they move. Multitudes of Bramins wave palm branches, recite extracts from their Sacred Books, and sing hymns in honour of Juggernaut. Troops of Devedasses dance around the car, while swarms of devotees, many of them naked, perform innumerable ceremonies, and make gestures, which to an unbelieving spectator seem very indecent. The crowd thrust each other violently for the privilege of seizing the ropes by which the chariot is drawn. Many throw themselves across the street, deeming themselves sure of salvation if they can be crushed to death by the wheels; and whenever this occurs, the multitude shout aloud in approbation. At this festival all distinctions are laid aside for the time; Bramin and Pariah can eat together without pollution.

On pilgrimages to these holy places, processions of different sects often fight by the way, to determine whose temples shall be enriched by the taxes levied on pilgrims. At one of their great religious festivals in 1760, a battle occurred between the Sivaites and the Vishnuites, in which the latter had eighteen thousand men killed.

Thousands of people are employed in carrying water to the temple of Juggernaut from an aperture in the rocks, called the Cow's Mouth, whence the Ganges issues. They travel more than two thousand miles, with two flasks of

water slung across their shoulders on a piece of elastic bamboo. The labour thus expended would long since have converted the whole country into a highly cultivated garden. It is often done as penance for the lighter sorts of sins. Women of rank, not venturing to appear in public, pay others to carry it for them. Princes and wealthy persons have this holy water conveyed to them in all parts of Hindostan. It is used at feasts, as well as upon religious festivals. A gentleman in Ceylon drank this water daily, brought three thousand miles, at the expense of five thousand rupees per month. As the Ganges is supposed to descend from Paradise, its waters increase in holiness the nearer they approach its source. At certain seasons of the year, millions of pilgrims, from various districts and countries, visit the place where two rivers unite to form the Ganges; and many thousands scramble up the steep precipices of the Himalaya mountains, where a shrine is erected over the spot whence it issues from under eternal snows.

Women have never been admitted to the priesthood by any of the sects. The Code of Menu forbids women and children to devote themselves to the ascetic life. But in the Pouranas are mentioned some who retired into the solitude of the forests, and became celebrated saints. The mother of Crishna vowed herself to perpetual contemplation, and attained to complete absorption in God. A story is likewise told of a child five years old, who went into the forest and performed most painful penances in honour of Vishnu. But this was an exceptional extravagance, originating in the popular admiration for ascetics, which fired the boy's imagination and tempted him to imitation. In Malabar, the memory of several saintly women is held in high veneration; particularly one named Avyar, whose wise sayings have become proverbs. The ancient Jains denied that a woman could attain the highest degree of holiness, and discountenanced their devoting themselves to the religious life. But this might have arisen from jealous care of their modesty; for in later times, when it was the custom for the saints to wear white robes, instead of going



naked, they granted that women also might arrive at a state of perfect sanctity. From the most ancient time, a class of women called Devedasses were devoted in early childhood to the service of the temple. They are often infants consecrated by their mothers to some god, in fulfilment of a religious vow. Being deemed an honourable way of providing for daughters, as well as a sacrifice highly acceptable to the deity, even princes are desirous of obtaining the situation for their children. It is required that they should be healthy, with pleasing features and graceful forms. The Devedasses bathe the little novitiate in a pool belonging to the temple, dress her in new robes, and ornament her with jewels. The presiding Bramin puts into her hand an image of the deity, and teaches her to repeat a solemn vow of dedication to his service. Her ears are then bored and the seal of the temple imprinted on her with red-hot iron. She is taught to read, write, dance, sing, and play on musical instruments. No other women in Hindostan, not even those of the highest rank, are allowed to read and write. Many frightful stories are in circulation concerning the disasters sure to befall a woman bold enough to attempt such an innovation. Even Devedasses are not permitted to look into the Sacred Books. Their scanty education is employed in learning verses and legends concerning the gods, to recite at public solemnities. It is their business to gather flowers for the temple, light the lamps, and perform the dancing and singing in religious ceremonies. About the waist, arms, and ankles, they wear little bells of silver or gold, which make a monotonous tinkling as they move, and mingle rather pleasantly with the small drums, tambourines, and silver cymbals, to which they keep time. They hold wooden castanets, which they strike in cadence, all making precisely the same movements and gestures at the same moment. At the end of each dance, they all turn toward the idol, and adore him with hands clasped before their faces. They receive food, clothing, and pay, from the funds of the temple. Five or six hundred are employed in the temple of Juggernaut,

At the great annual festival, one is chosen for a bride to the god, to whom it is supposed he comes in the night and reveals whether it will be a fruitful year, and what kind of feasts, processions, prayers and contributions he requires from the people in order to secure it. She is placed in the chariot with the idol, and as it slowly rolls along, she proclaims these oracles to the believing multitude.

The Devedasses are not allowed to quit the precincts of the temple, or to marry. Some say they are allowed to receive no lovers but Bramins; others declare they are at liberty to choose among any of the three higher castes. The money thus obtained is put into the treasury of the temple. If they have daughters, they are brought up in the same way as themselves; if sons, they are trained to play on musical instruments and assist the priests. When these women become old or unhealthy, or the Bramins wish to have them leave for any reason, they are dismissed; but they are ever after received in society with peculiar respect. A degree of sanctity is attached to them, and it is considered an honour to marry them. Sometimes, however, if they are old when they retire from service, they are reduced to poverty, unless they have a handsome daughter, on whose earnings they can rely.

In no part of the world are suicides so extremely common as in India. Thousands perish every year by drowning in the sacred rivers, lying in wait for crocodiles, starving, burning, and causing themselves to be buried alive. This doubtless originates in the prevailing idea that the connection of spirit with matter is an evil, and the destruction of the body a sacrifice acceptable to the deities. The number of women who voluntarily seek death is much greater than that of men; for in addition to their belief in the same melancholy creed, life is far less free to them, and their abject situation requires more severe repression of all the natural sentiments and instincts. To be born again into a female form they dread as one of the worst punishments. To avoid it, they perform innumerable religious ceremonies, and subject themselves to most

painful penances. When the custom first began of women burning themselves on the funeral pile of their husbands, is unknown. It probably originated in the universal practice of offering sacrifices at funerals, and at tombs, to expiate the sins of the deceased. Perhaps some zealous devotee voluntarily set the example, and many motives would naturally combine to fix it as a custom. This self-immolation is called Suttee, more properly Sati, a Sanscrit word meaning purification. It is not enjoined in any of their Sacred Writings, but some of their celebrated saints commend it as highly meritorious; as may be seen from the following extracts:—"So long as a woman does not burn herself after the death of her lord, she will be subject to transmigrations into the female form." "The woman who follows her lord in death expiates the sins of three races; her father's line, her mother's line, and the family of him to whom she was given a virgin." "Even though her husband had slain a Bramin, or returned evil for good, or killed an intimate friend, the woman expiates his crimes." "Possessing her husband as her chiefest good, herself the best of women, enjoying the highest delights, she shall partake of bliss with him as long as fourteen Indras reign."

The professed rule is that the immolation must be perfectly voluntary; and since such rewards were offered in Paradise, in addition to the applause of multitudes on earth, while on the other hand law and custom condemned every widow to an extremely secluded and gloomy life, it is not surprising that great numbers rushed on such a fate with religious ecstasy, or the courage of despair. A Bramin of Bagnapore had more than a hundred wives. Twenty-two of them were burned with his corpse, though several of them had seldom even seen the man for whom they died. The fire was kept burning three days, waiting the arrival of successive victims. A woman is never allowed to marry again, or even to mention the name of another man, after the death of her husband or betrothed. As they are often mated by parents in infancy, they may

be left widows while very small children: but nevertheless they disgrace themselves if they depart from a life of perpetual chastity. Those who are thus left desolate often sacrifice themselves, either from religious zeal or weariness of life. A girl whose betrothed died when she was six years old, is mentioned as having performed the Sati at fifteen. No entreaties could prevail upon her to relinquish her project. An immolation performed with great firmness was a subject of family pride, and recounted to succeeding generations. Widows sometimes mounted the funeral pile with heroic enthusiasm, laid the husband's head on their knees, and themselves brandished a torch to light the pile. But these sacrifices were not always voluntary, even when they appeared so. Husbands, clinging to the idea of exclusive possession, even after death, often left injunctions to their wives to make the offering, and to their heirs to urge them to it. Women hold no property, and it was the interest of relatives, on whom the widow would depend entirely for support, to excite their religious zeal sufficiently to make them brave the terrors of this fiery ordeal. If the courage of the poor creature failed at the last dreadful moment, and she succeeded in making her escape, she sunk into irretrievable disgrace, which was reflected on her kindred. Therefore, when such symptoms were discovered, Bramins tied down the victim with strong cords, and while the flames rose, her screams were drowned in the din of musical instruments.

After a long contest with Hindoo prejudices, the British government at last succeeded in abolishing this cruel custom wherever they had jurisdiction. The women were generally most grateful to them for the change. They are gentle, affectionate, and devotional; extremely fond of carrying offerings to the temples, and performing religious ceremonies in the sacred groves.

The belief in a universal interchange of souls throughout creation produces singular ideas and customs with regard to animals. Vishnu assumes their shape as frequently as he does that of man. They are not only represented as



constant companions and friends of the deities, but often as being themselves of divine intelligence, dwelling in Paradise, and occasionally incarnated on earth, to assist the god to whose service they were devoted. Garuda, prince of the eagles, is supposed to guard the entrance of Vishnu's Paradise. Hanuman, prince of the monkeys, assumed the form of an ape, and rendered important services to Vishnu while on earth in the person of Rama. There are numerous other similar instances. In the Ramayana it is stated that Garuda, having sinned in thought against his divine master, went in penitent guise to seek counsel from the crow Bhusanda, who dwelt on the lofty summits of the Blue Mountains, and had been devoted to the service of Rama from his birth. This crow was "experienced in virtues and vices; well acquainted with all that had happened since the beginning of time; sometimes wrapped in profound meditation on the being of God; at others pouring forth invocations, and proclaiming the praises of Vishnu to the birds of land and water." He became the instructor of Garuda, and informed him that he had once been a Bramin, but had passed into a crow, in consequence of maledictions pronounced upon him by a powerful saint. With these ideas, no wonder the brute creation are regarded with tenderness and reverence. Bulls and cows are sacred in the highest degree, especially the latter, on account of a cow in Paradise, styled, "Mother of the gods, and of three worlds." Even the dung of this animal is sacred, and is used in many religious ceremonies. Hindoos will die rather than taste of beef; a fact which has been often proved on board vessels where all the provisions were expended except salt beef. The punishment for selling a bullock to a European is to be impaled alive. Monkeys are sacred, on account of Hanuman, famous in the exploits of Rama. Rajahs and nobles often expend large sums to celebrate a festival in honour of those animals. A monkey, or an ape, on such occasions, is seated in a splendid palanquin, and followed by musicians, singers, and dancing girls, amid a gorgeous shower of

fire-works. Two British officers, who shot a monkey during one of their hunting excursions, were driven by a mob of devotees into the river Jumna, where they perished. In Jafanapatan, an ape's tooth, believed to be Hanuman's, was preserved for centuries as a relic in the temple, and many pilgrimages were made to see it. After the Portuguese conquered that part of the country, the Hindoos sent an embassy to them offering three hundred thousand ducats for the recovery of this treasure. But, by advice of the Catholic Bishop, the tooth was burned in presence of the ambassadors, and its ashes thrown into the sea. A cunning man afterward persuaded them to buy another tooth, representing that an invisible power had substituted a false tooth to be burned by unbelievers, and miraculously saved the true one. The Crocodile is another of their sacred animals. Hindoo mothers are remarkable for passionate love of offspring, yet they often throw their infants into the jaws of these monsters, believing they thus propitiate the deities and secure the child's salvation. The hooded serpent Cobra do Capello is sacred, on account of its association with Vishnu. Some other species of serpents are regarded by them as peculiarly the protecting Spirits of gardens and vineyards, and therefore they will not consent to destroy them. Indeed all animals have a degree of sacredness to a devout Hindoo, arising from the belief that each one is a manifested portion of God. Voracious and unclean creatures they believe to be the residence of malignant Spirits and bad souls. Those that subsist on vegetables are supposed to be favoured by divine beings. They peculiarly venerate ants and bees, conceiving the Spirits which animate them to be gifted with superior intelligence. They believe every animal is endowed with thought and memory, and has some comprehensive mode of communicating ideas to its own species.

At Surat is a Banian hospital, enclosed with high walls and divided into courts, where diseased and aged animals are watched with tenderest care. When an animal breaks his limb, or is otherwise disabled, his master carries him

to the hospital, where he is received without reference to the caste or nation of his owner. If he recovers, he cannot be reclaimed, but remains to draw water for other creatures not able to work. When Sir James Forbes visited this place, it was full of horses, oxen, sheep, goats, monkeys, poultry, birds, and an aged tortoise, known to have been there seventy-five years. One ward was appropriated to rats, mice, and vermin. The overseers frequently hired beggars for a stipulated sum to pass a night among fleas and bugs, on condition of allowing them a feast without molestation.

Pious pilgrims are often met on the road carrying a soft broom to sweep the ground, lest they should tread on insects, and with nostrils covered to avoid inhaling them. A learned Bramin, much interested in science, took great delight in exploring the library of an English resident, who one day showed him a solar microscope, to convince him that the precautions of devotees were useless, inasmuch as every draught of water was filled with animalculæ. The Bramin became very thoughtful, and offered large sums for the instrument. Being difficult to obtain in India, the owner for some time refused; but at last, overcome by repeated importunities, he gave it to him. He instantly seized a large stone and dashed the microscope into a thousand atoms. In answer to the angry expostulations of his foreign friend, he said: "O that I had remained in the happy state of ignorance wherein you found me! As my knowledge increased so did my pleasure, until I beheld the wonders of that instrument. From that moment I have been tormented with doubt and perplexed by mystery. I am now a solitary individual among millions of people all educated in the same belief with myself; all happy in their ignorance. So may they ever remain! I shall keep the secret in my own bosom, where it will corrode my peace and disturb my rest. Forgive me, my valuable friend; and, O, bring here no more implements of knowledge and destruction."

Many causes have been at work to produce a gradual

degeneracy in the manners, customs, and opinions of the Hindoos. Knowledge of the Vedas is confined to the learned, and few ever heard of such a doctrine as the unity of God. The great mass of the people are neglected by the Bramins, who are either taken up with the acquisition of temporal power, or striving to obtain spiritual elevation for themselves, by contemplation and penances. Such instruction as the populace do receive, rather serves to confuse their moral perceptions. Thefts, perjury, or murder, may be atoned for by presents to the priests, and the performance of prescribed ceremonies, without further inconvenience to the culprit; while killing a cow, selling beef to a European, offending a Bramin, or being converted to a foreign religion, involves either the penalty of death, or total excommunication from society by loss of caste. Everywhere the limitations of caste come in to narrow the sympathies and impede the progress of intellect. Hindoos are by nature remarkably kind, gentle, and charitable; but their tender-heartedness disappears the moment it comes in collision with the laws of caste. If a Bramin sees a Pariah drowning, he must not even extend a long pole to save him; for by so doing he would incur pollution involving loss of caste. A Christian missionary ventured to employ a converted Pariah to teach other Hindoo converts; but they protested strongly against such an innovation. "How is it possible," said they, "to allow a Pariah to come into our houses to pray?" Four hundred persons left the congregation in consequence, but twenty remained to hear the Christian Scriptures read by a man who was socially their inferior; and those twenty were more valuable than the four hundred would have been, with the Pariah silenced.

Hindoo worship makes no provision for the instruction of the people in religious ideas or moral duties. It consists of a routine of ceremonies. Every image is regularly served with rice, fruit, and flowers, which after a prescribed time are removed for the use of priests and their attendants. Perfumes and incense are considered among the most acceptable offerings. Large quantities of frankincense were



carried from Arabia to Hindostan at a period so remote that the use of it is mentioned in the ancient poem, Ramayana. Among consecrated plants, the Soma, or Moon Plant, is peculiarly sacred. The juice is a holy drink which Bramins taste on certain religious occasions, after having offered prescribed prayers. They say it is not necessary to understand the prayers which they mechanically repeat from the Vedas. It is sufficient to know what deity is addressed, and what event is the occasion for supplication or thanksgiving. In many cases, mysterious virtue is ascribed to reciting the form of words alternately backward and forward.

Religious models for the people are of a lower character than they were in the ancient times. There are now few devotees who attempt to copy the austere virtue of old hermits; but popular reverence for such characters has produced a swarm of mendicants, who imitate only their extravagancies. These are often described by travellers under the name of Fakeers, or Yogeas. On their forehead and arms they usually wear the perpendicular line emblematic of Sivaites, or the horizontal line of Vishnuites. It is marked by the priests with a composition made of burnt sandal-wood, tumeric, and cow-dung. Doubtless many of these devotees sincerely believe that they expiate their own sins and those of others, by their severe sufferings. Some dig a grave and remain buried in the earth, leaving only a small aperture for the admission of food. An English gentleman in the neighbourhood of Calcutta, perceiving a strange-looking creature in a hole of the ground, beat it till the blood flowed, without causing any movement, or any remonstrance. It was a Fakeer who had vowed himself to that mode of torture. Some stand in one constrained posture for years and years. Others crawl on their hands and knees round an extensive empire. Some roll their bodies over the ground from Indus to Ganges, collecting money to dig a well, or build a temple, in atonement for some sin. Many of them go entirely naked, and come to look like wild beasts, with nails of

twenty years growth, dirty matted hair, and arms withered by being held aloft for years. Women of distinction compete with each other for the honour of feeding such saints.

All of this class do not renounce the world so completely. There are communities of them, on whom the devout bestow houses and lands. They make money by agriculture and trade, and send out beggars to procure alms. There is a community of Sivaite saints, who are accustomed to sell their military services to the highest bidder; being willing to fight against everything but their own religion. They stimulate their courage by excessive use of intoxicating herbs and drinks, though wine and spirituous liquors are strictly forbidden by their Sacred Books, and ceremonies of purification are prescribed for a religious man who has merely drank water from vessels that have contained such liquors. Associations of female devotees, said to be far from austere in their lives, reside in some of the temples of Siva. The Fakeers usually wear garments of yellowish red, similar in colour to the bark-cloth worn by ancient anchorites. There appears to be sacredness attached to the colour; for there is an express law forbidding Bramins to sell red cloth, or woven bark.

Like the ascetic sages of ancient time, these modern Fakeers are great travellers. They are met everywhere, from the confines of Russia to Cape Comorin, from China to Bombay. They wander about in armed troops, on pilgrimages to holy cities and sacred wells, levying contributions as they go. To extort charity from passengers, they stun their ears with loud bells, or strike together plates of brass. Some of them are handsome, robust men. They eat everything but beef, and are often immoderate in the use of food and intoxicating liquors. When they arrive at villages, they dance and sing songs describing the amours of Siva or Crishna, for which they receive a reward of food or money. On one occasion, Bombay was so infested by these mendicants, that they became an intolerable nuisance. The governor deemed it imprudent to make any direct attempt to disperse them. But he issued an order that all

beggars and idlers should be set to cleaning the great ditch surrounding the fortifications, and the next day not one of the saintly fraternity was to be found. Bishop Heber, speaking of the sacred city of Benares, says: "Fakeers' houses occur at every turn, adorned with idols, and sending out an unceasing tinkling of discordant instruments; while religious mendicants of every sect, offering every conceivable deformity, which chalk, cow-dung, disease, matted locks, distorted limbs, and disgusting attitudes of penance, could show, literally line the principal streets on both sides. I saw repeatedly men who had kept their hands clenched till the nails grew out at the backs; or hopping on one foot, the other having shrunk close up to the hams, from a vow never to use it. Devotees go about with small spears thrust through their tongues and arms, or with hot irons pressed against their sides. Their countenances denote suffering, but they evidently glory in patient endurance, thinking doubtless that they are expiating sins by their agony. These beggars keep up the most pitiful cry for alms." Among some sects, persons of every caste, even Pariahs, can become Fakeers. These are little respected by the higher classes of Hindostan, and the Bramins especially avoid them. Yet some of the Bramins themselves are by no means worthy of the reverence which their station and office demands. Within the temples they not unfrequently fight and scratch each other, scrambling for the fees and offerings. In days of primitive simplicity a Bramin was not allowed to take a second wife, unless the first bore him no children, or committed some great misdemeanor; but they now marry fifteen, twenty, or a hundred wives, as suits their convenience. The Code of Menu strictly forbids receiving money or gifts in exchange for a daughter or female relative; but in these days, parents, even of the highest castes, do not scruple to dispose of young daughters to whoever will pay the most, though he be old or diseased. The expenses for the maintenance of the priesthood are enormous. One temple in the Deccan maintained forty thousand officiating Bramins,

besides a great number of Devedasses. Of course it is for their interest to inculcate a blind unquestioning faith in all they teach, and to load popular worship with images and ceremonies, for all of which they receive pay. It being admitted that images were necessary for the ignorant, as pictures are for children, and these images commanding a ready sale, they of course multiplied rapidly. They are of every variety of size and material, from gold to wood and clay, from thirty feet high to a finger in length. They are generally grotesque, deformed things, made by the smith and the potter, or rudely fashioned by the humble worshippers in preparation for some festival. The Bramins reconcile this with the Veda doctrine of God's unity, by saying these are mere subordinate agents fulfilling various offices in the universe under One Ruler. But the populace have no such idea. They believe all these gods and goddesses to be independent deities, with supreme power over the departments they govern. When a Hindoo buys an image, he goes to the priest to have certain ceremonies performed over it, which are supposed to endow it not only with life, but with supernatural power. If the idol be masculine, another ceremony must be performed to marry him to the image of some goddess. Not only their temples but their houses are full of these idols, some of which are extremely hideous. They offer them a portion of their food, fan them in warm weather, cover them from cold, and put them to bed every night. The Bramins tell many legends of their assuming various shapes and colours, and working miracles; all of which are readily believed.

There is universal belief in Evil Spirits, of various ranks and degrees of power, from gigantic demons, who attack the orbs of light, down to the malicious little Pucks, who delight in small mischief. They suppose these enter the minds of men, producing bad thoughts and criminal actions, and also take possession of the body, producing insanity, fits, and all manner of diseases. They can be cast out only by some form of holy words pronounced by the priest, with ceremonies prescribed for such occasions.



While Sir James Forbes was presiding judge in a Hindoo district, a petition was sent to him stating that a certain woman had been for a long time possessed by two Evil Spirits; and that the petitioner's daughter, having been with this woman, and witnessed certain conjuring tricks, and heard the devils talk, came home and fell down on the bed without sense or motion, and continued so for hours. She continued to have these fits for two months; at the end of which time, she told her parents that one of the devils had come out of the woman and entered into her, tormenting her all the time to offer it food and sacrifices. Dr. Buchanan mentions a man in Mysore supposed to be possessed by one of these demons, which caused him to fall down in fits. The whole village was in an uproar, and could only be appeased by the presence of a Bramin, who recited prayers, and strewed consecrated ashes over the individual. Amulets and charms, duly prepared by religious ceremonies, are worn as a protection against Evil Spirits, likewise against witchcraft. They have many magicians, most of whom are women. It is said they can bewitch people by keeping their eyes steadfastly fixed on them; that they can travel through the air invisibly; can bring intelligence from remote places with incredible swiftness; can read secret thoughts; and if thrown into the river with a stone tied to them, they will not sink.

Sir James Forbes mentions several individuals who were in possession of a singular power, seemingly supernatural; particularly a Bramin, who could see what was occurring in distant places, and read the thoughts of people who came into his presence. He confesses himself much puzzled by prophecies and revelations of this kind, which most undoubtedly occurred during his residence in India.

Some degree of chemical knowledge has existed among the Bramins for many ages. They are acquainted with the antidotes to many poisons, and have a chemical preparation, called Tantra, with which they rub the skin to enable it to resist the action of fire. When people are suspected of crime, Bramins are often called in to determine

the question by ordeal. Sometimes the accused individual is ordered to swallow poison; sometimes he walks on red-hot iron; sometimes a coin is put in a vessel of boiling oil, into which he plunges his arm and brings out the coin. The arm is previously washed by Bramins, who supplicate the appropriate deities, and afterward pronounce a benediction. If these dangerous experiments prove harmless, it is considered a sufficient proof of innocence.

Now, as in ancient times, they are firm believers in astrology, and watch the motions of birds and bees for omens. When a child is born, they consult the aspect of the stars to ascertain what were the signs of his destiny. When a ship is about to sail, or a bargain to be concluded, they go to a Bramin or a soothsayer, to decide whether a day is lucky or unlucky. Some days are proper for going to the north, others for going to the south. Some are supposed to be so entirely under evil influence, that they abstain from all manner of business. They have lucky hours, and even minutes, which they carefully appropriate to the transaction of very important affairs. The Bramins annually prepare an astrological almanac, defining what days are lucky or unlucky, for the various actions of life. But even if all other signs are propitious, a clap of thunder will usually make them relinquish any undertaking.

At the commencement of an eclipse, people rush to the rivers to bathe, and throw water toward the sun, with many invocations. Prayers on such occasions are worth a hundred times as much as at any other time; for they believe that a powerful demon seizes on the sun and puts him in great anguish, from which he may be relieved by the prayers and donations of human beings purified by ablutions.

When they travel, they often carry with them the image of a serpent wreathed round a pole six or seven feet high; and every morning the whole company pay adoration to it.

The death of a cow or calf is thought to be a sure indi-

cation that the deities are offended. On such occasions there is great lamentation in a family. The owner of the animal often leaves home for two or three years, to perform long pilgrimages of expiation. The water of a cow is used in various ceremonies of religious purification; for similar purposes, they likewise make a preparation from the dung of a perfectly black cow. When it has lain in the shade till it has become perfectly dry and hard, Bramins carry it to some of the sacred places, burn it on a pile of chaff, and gather the ashes into vessels. They then sift it three times, recite prayers over it, sprinkle it with clean water, and make it into small lumps, which they dry, and perfume with the essence of flowers. They dissolve them in water, and, turning toward the sun, sprinkle it on their foreheads and breasts, with appropriate prayers. They use it to avert misfortunes, and peculiarly to keep off the Spirits of Death, who are sent for human souls. Bramins and saints keep a large supply of this article for devotees. They have great horror of touching the dead, or any thing that has been in contact with a corpse. If a man even hears that a relative has died in a distant country, he is deemed unclean, and must purify himself by religious ceremonies. If a whole year has passed since the death, merely touching water is considered sufficient purification.

Water is supposed to cleanse the soul, and guard from evil. When a child is born, priests sprinkle it, and sprinkle the dwelling, and all the inmates of the house bathe. They do this from an idea that it keeps off Evil Spirits. People perform ablutions before they eat; and priests purify themselves with water, accompanied with prayers, on innumerable occasions. When a man is dying, Bramins hasten to plunge him into a river, believing that the departing soul may be thus freed from impurities before it quits the body. Some rivers are deemed more peculiarly holy and efficacious than others; such as the Ganges, the Indus, and the Crishna. The water of the Ganges is used on all the most solemn occasions. Images of the deities are washed with it; and Bramins are sprinkled with it, when inducted into

the priestly office. Happy above other men is he who is drowned in that sacred stream. Once in twelve years, the waters of Lake Cumbhacum are supposed to be gifted with power to cleanse from all sin. As this period approaches, Bramins send messengers in every direction to announce when the great day of ablution will take place. The shores are crowded with a vast multitude of men, women, and children, from far and near. They plunge at a signal from the officiating Bramin, and in the universal rush, many a one is suffocated, or has his limbs broken. Water from Ganges is kept in the temples, and when people are dying they often send from a great distance to obtain some of it. Before devotees put their feet into a river, they wash their hands, and utter a prayer.

In some processes of purification, the Bramin rubs mud on the man, and then plunges him three times, throwing in a handful of rice each time as an offering. During this process, he says: "O Supreme Lord, this man is impure, like the mud of this stream; but as water cleanses him from this dirt, do thou free him from his sin."

Fire is deemed a still higher degree of purification than water. Thus whole families were supposed to be redeemed from sin by the self-immolation of a widow on the funeral pile. Saints who destroyed themselves by fire were believed to ascend to the higher degrees of Paradise, and enjoy an immensely long period of heavenly bliss. In honour of some of their deities, they walk over burning coals, to the sound of musical instruments, faster or slower, according to their degree of zeal. Some carry their children in their arms, that they also may receive a share of the benefit. If sins which require fire are not purified in this world, it is supposed they must pass through a fiery process in the next.

Blood, being the seat of life, was always considered a very efficacious atonement for sin. The gods were supposed to be propitiated according to the number and value of the victims. When great national benefits were to be obtained, or evils averted, they sometimes sacrificed



a thousand horses at once. It was an ancient custom for Bramins to lay the sins of the nation on the head of a horse. It was done with solemn imprecations and religious ceremonies, and then the animal was turned loose to carry off the sins of the people. Bulls were rarely sacrificed, on account of their veneration for those creatures. Men, being higher than animals in the scale of existence, their blood was deemed more excellent as an expiation; and by being sacrificed it was supposed that they secured Paradise for themselves also. One of their most solemn sacrifices consisted of a man, a bull, and a horse. There is a tradition that in ancient times a young man and woman, richly decorated, were thrown into the Ganges, as an offering to the god of the river. In later times, they substituted images, instead of living beings. Human sacrifices were abolished at an early period, and animal sacrifices are totally disapproved by numerous sects. Men, horses, and bulls were formerly offered to the grim goddess Cali; but now her altars flow with the blood of kids only. To reconcile this custom with their tenderness for animals, a belief is inculcated that the human soul imprisoned in the brute is thus purified from all its sins, and, freed from degrading transmigrations, rises to the Paradise of Indra, and becomes a musician in his band.

Hindoos have many religious festivals, most of them observed either at the new moon or the full moon. They have six successive festivals, in commemoration of the six periods in which Brahma completed the work of Creation. On the twenty-fifth of December, people decorate their houses with garlands and gilt paper, and universally make presents to friends and relatives. This custom is said to be of very great antiquity. In November, they have a festival, during which they light up vast fires by day, and illuminate all their houses at night. At the full moon in October, they commemorate the circular dance of Crishna with the Gopias, which some learned men suppose to have an astronomical significance. During the great festival called Ramayana, the streets are filled with gorgeous processions,

accompanied by dancers and musicians, playing on horns, gongs, cymbals, and drums. Dramatic representations illustrate the wonderful adventures of Rama; an incarnation of Vishnu, at different periods of his life, prince, conqueror, and holy hermit. Three children are dressed with high tinsel crowns, and painted with vermillion, to imitate the statues of Rama, his wife Sita, and his brother Lakshman. Hanuman, Rama's great general, is represented by a man armed with a club, with a mask like an ape, and an ape's tail tied to his back. In ancient times, it is said, these three children were poisoned at the end of the feast, that their souls might be absorbed in the deities they represented; but this was afterward prohibited.

The ignorance and credulity of the people have been at all periods practised upon by artful or self-deluded men. About the end of the year 1829, appeared an extraordinary child named Narayun Powar. He was the son of a peasant, and born in a village belonging to the Rajah of Sattara. When only eight years old, he was famous for his extraordinary power over snakes. He enticed them from among rocks, stones, and ditches, played with them, and ran about naked with them twisted all round his neck and arms. Whether he fondled or chastised them, they took it all in good part. They came when he called, and went away at his bidding; but he was seldom easy without some of his favourite animals around him. Why they had this predilection for each others' company, and how he obtained such singular power over them, each one must explain according to his own theory; but it is a fact that several similar instances of serpent-taming have occurred in the East. In the time of the ancient anchorites, one of the signs of having become perfectly holy, completely identified with God himself, was the power of handling serpents without harm. Whether the parents of Narayun and the Bramins in his neighbourhood really believed his power was derived from such a source, or whether they saw fit so to represent it from motives of self-interest, is known to themselves. There was an old prediction by the poet Toolseedas

that an extraordinary person would arise and redeem Hindostan from foreign dominion. He was not to be a mere man, but an incarnation of Indrajit, a hermit of such exalted holiness that he had the sublime reward of dying by the hand of Rama himself. Bramins sought to prove that the period predicted was precisely that of Narayun's birth. Mysterious words were said to have dropped from the child at various times, giving hints of his divine nature, and the purposes for which he had come to earth. He certainly did not seem to be much absorbed in heavenly things; for like other boys he was full of play and mischief, and particularly fond of gambling with small shells called cowries. However, they called him "Narayun the Holy," and finally "the living God Narayun." In his name they established a place of sacred bathing, where the sinful and the sickly were invited to come and wash away diseases and crimes. Rumours spread through the country that many cripples had been cured, and many blind received their sight. Bramins composed hymns in his praise, and four were appointed to keep record of all his words and actions. His disciples taught that men ought no longer to worship images of wood and stone, but place all their faith in this living divinity, come to deliver them from all foreign yokes, as Rama had rid the world of giants. In a few months, ten thousand pilgrims, many of them of wealth and rank, came to lay their offerings at the feet of Narayun; and many who could not come, forwarded vows and offerings. On every one who bathed in the waters, or bowed to the divinity, a tax was levied. His parents and the administering Bramins grew rich rapidly. A little girl, said to be an incarnated goddess, was chosen for his bride; and it was rumoured that on a certain day he would cause a magnificently caparisoned horse to rise out of the earth, on which he would ride forth to meet her. The enthusiasm spread wonderfully, and infected all classes more or less. It is even said that a European resident in India, a distinguished scholar, and a firm believer in Christianity, being asked his opinion, answered: "The facts I have heard

quite stagger me. The whole Hindoo population are thoroughly convinced of the divinity of this child, and are going mad after him. It is impossible to say what extraordinary means God *may* adopt for the spiritual recovery of the Hindoos. Ordinary means and missions seem to have failed with them."

The Rajah of Sattara manifested great uneasiness at the pretensions of Narayun. The wife of one of his ministers, who for several years had been subject to singular trances, had prophesied that *he* was destined to restore the old Hindoo empire; and the rival claims of the peasant boy excited his jealousy. But while the enthusiasm was at its height, the child died. He was one day exhibiting as usual his perfect control over snakes, which were brought to him in great numbers by strangers, when a Pariah produced a very large one, declared to have been brought all the way from Benares. Narayun seized hold of it boldly, but for the first time he found a serpent he could not manage. It became irritable and bit him mortally. His death was attributed to magic, and it was confidently predicted that he would rise on the third day. When this hope failed, they said it would certainly occur on the eighth day. A crowd of pilgrims waited to witness his resurrection, and finally dispersed disappointed and sorrowing. Rumours were afloat that he had actually appeared in different places. Some tried to propagate the belief that his soul had lodged in the body of a Bramin, who would eventually fulfil all that had been promised of him. But finally it all passed away, and his worshippers came to the conclusion that he was merely an incarnated demon, who came on earth for a while to amuse himself with mortals.

The Christian missionaries of various sects, who have been in India for many years, have made little perceptible progress in changing the faith of the people; but many causes are at work to fulfil the prophecy connected with the fall of Siva's Staff at Benares. Hindostan being the seat of very lucrative commerce, a variety of foreign nations have contended for possession of it. Mahometans



from Tartary began their conquests as early as A. D. 976; and after a long succession of bloody wars, during which they destroyed a vast number of temples, and carried off immense treasures, they firmly established their religion in large districts of the country. Many adopted the faith and costume of their conquerors, and others were finally allowed freedom to worship in their own way. One of the principal mosques was formerly a Hindoo temple. They killed a cow in it to prevent any of the natives from entering it.

On the Malabar coast are more than two hundred thousand Nestorian Christians, whom the Hindoos call Nazarenes. They have had a regular establishment of bishops and clergy there for more than a thousand years. In the fifth century, Jews, fleeing from the oppression of Christian countries, were allowed by a compassionate Bramin to settle in Hindostan. They are now numerous in some portions of the country. Fire-Worshippers, escaping from the Mahometan conquerors of Persia, in the seventh century, begged for a shelter, and had their claim allowed, on condition that they would eat no beef, and never kill ox or cow. They have scrupulously kept this promise, and large numbers of them reside in India, under the name of Parsees. The Portuguese, who have long had possessions there, established the Inquisition at Goa, and Catholic missionaries have been scattered through the country. France and Denmark have settlements there. Great Britain has conquered several kingdoms, and her laws govern millions of the people. She has had Episcopal bishops resident there for many years, and numerous missions from dissenting sects.

Consequently, the landscape of India is dotted all over with Hindoo pagodas, Mahometan mosques, Jewish synagogues, Catholic cathedrals, and Protestant churches. The Hindoos, though remarkable for tenacious attachment to their own forms of faith, are very ready to admit that all modes of worship are acceptable to God, if performed with sincerity of heart. It is a common maxim with them that

"Heaven is a palace with many doors, and each one may enter in his own way." The Brahmans, who compiled the Code of Genoo Laws, say in the preface, that "the Supreme Being is sometimes employed with the attendance of the mosque, in counting the sacred beads, and sometimes in the temple at the adoration of idols. He is the friend of the Hindoo, the teacher of the Mahomedan, the companion of the Christian, and the confidant of the Jew." Sir William Jones says: "It is their firm opinion that the Deity has appeared innumerable times, and by innumerable avatars, not only in many parts of this world, but of all worlds, for the salvation of his creatures; and that both Christians and Hindoos adore the same God under different forms." Animated by this kindly feeling, their women and children often gather fruit and flowers for the mosque and the cathedral, as well as for their own sacred groves.

When men of different creeds are brought into frequent contact, they cannot avoid mutually giving and receiving. Their prejudices gradually soften and finally melt away. The intermingling of religious ideas from various sources is conspicuous in the teaching of many modern Hindoos. One of these, named Swanee Narain, attracted considerable attention about 1820. He went through various districts teaching and exhorting the people; and many villages of bad character became virtuous and orderly under his influence. He inculcated temperance and purity, and forbade his disciples to look upon a woman. He taught the existence of one invisible God, who made and sustains all things, and whose especial dwelling is in the hearts of those that diligently seek him. But he likewise taught that there is a Spirit, who was with God from all eternity, who cometh from God, who likewise is God, and who hath made known to man the will of God. This Spirit he said came down to earth in ancient times in the form of Krishna, whom wicked men put to death by magic. He was the same as the Sun, and was to be worshipped as God's image or representative. Since his death there had been many pretended revelations and false divinities set up.

Bishop Heber, in conversation with him, remarked that he had spoken truly when he said there was but one God. He tried to convince him that one incarnation of that God was sufficient for mankind, and existed in the person of Jesus Christ, who was the Word of God, proceeding from him, and one with him from all eternity. But Swamee Narain insisted there had been many incarnations, suited to the wants of different nations; one for Christians, another for Mahometans, others for Hindoos. He said he regretted the prevailing worship of images; but symbols were necessary for the ignorant, and he feared to offend their prejudices by preaching against them.

The Hindoos are extremely averse to any change from ancient customs and opinions. The description given of them in the time of Alexander the Great, more than two thousand years ago, would nearly describe them now. But notwithstanding this strong conservative tendency, innovations of various kinds have been gradually introduced; especially in Bengal, which is more subject to a mixture with foreigners in the relations of government and commerce. When Hindoos were invited to dine with European magistrates or merchants, they ate at a table by themselves, and had their food cooked by one of their own nation, according to the rules of their religion. This scruple still remains with a majority of the people; but here and there liberal individuals have set it aside, saying: "We think the Christians are as pure as we are, and certainly some of them are wiser." The higher castes, who formerly abstained from animal food, now eat fish, mutton, and kid's flesh; and the lower orders eat almost everything except beef. The spirit of caste still exerts a tremendously strong influence, but its barriers are thrown down in numerous instances. In the extensive districts under British control, Bramins are executed for capital crimes, the same as other men. Some of the wealthiest families are of Soodra origin, and the descendants of Bramins may sometimes be found among cooks, or serving as soldiers in the army. Though intermixture with foreigners is for-

bidden as a great sin, large classes of half European parentage have sprung up, and are early accustomed to a foreign language and a foreign faith. The lower orders manifest an increasing neglect of the rules of caste, and are generally desirous to send their children to schools established by the English. It is predicted that English will become the prevailing language. The upper classes now generally speak it with fluency, and take great interest in its literature. It was formerly considered very wrong to give foreigners access to their Sacred Books; but there is now an established profession of Hindoo teachers in Bengal to instruct Europeans in Sanscrit, that they may examine the Vedas, the Shastras, and the Pouranas. Attendants on the temples begin to complain that the offerings are of little worth, compared with former times. One of them lately told a missionary that he was unable to procure means to repair the roof, in consequence of which water was dripping on the image of the god during all the rainy season. He reported this to the people, but they seemed quite indifferent about it. He thought they were all becoming unbelievers.

Bramins strive to reconcile themselves to this state of things, on the ground that they are living in the Cali Yug, when religion is reduced to naught by decrees of Deity, and therefore it is useless to try to screen their Sacred Books from the profanation of foreign hands. Atrocious murders have often been confessed and extenuated in their courts, on the plea that it is the Cali Yug, when crimes must abound.

No priesthood in the annals of the world have retained so much power, for such a long series of centuries, as the Bramins. That as a class they have abused this power, is the inevitable result of possessing it; but there are among them intelligent, learned, and exemplary men, whose characters would do honour to any nation. Bishop Heber says: "In one of the temples I saw a Bramin who passed the whole day on a little pulpit, about as high and large as a dressing-table. At night, he sleeps on the pavement



beside it. His constant occupation is reading or lecturing on the Vedas, which he does to as many as will hear him, from eight in the morning till four in the evening. He asks for nothing; but a small copper basin stands near the pulpit, and he subsists entirely on the alms which the charitable are disposed to drop into it. He is a small, pale man, of an interesting countenance, said to be eloquent and extremely learned in the Sanscrit." Some of the Bramins of Malabar wrote to the Danish missionaries: "God alone rules all the world, and all that is therein. It is he who rules the eight hundred and forty thousand kinds of living creatures; but because of his various appearances, he has different names. Hence we say Brahma creates, Vishnu rules, Siva destroys; all which different expressions denote but One Supreme Being. And when we attribute the protection of towns and villages to tutelar gods, our meaning is that the Great God does mediately protect towns and countries by his vicegerents and governors. For there is not the least motion in the world without the will of the First Cause. Indeed there are many gods, but they cannot so much as move a straw out of its place, without the assistance of the First Cause; therefore, he is justly called the Lord of the World; for it is his power that rules all things, and he is infinite and incomprehensible." This statement doubtless represents the general views of enlightened classes of Hindoos at the present time; but they cannot yet believe that ideas which elevate priests and princes would also elevate the people. They argue that to present the doctrine of a purely spiritual Deity to men absorbed in the cares of animal existence, would inevitably make them atheists. Strongly attached to their ancient religion, from force of education, Bramins maintain that it is entirely misunderstood by Europeans, whose modes of thought prevent them from having any conception of the spiritual significance of their allegorical writings and sacred ceremonies. Intelligent worshippers of every age and nation might urge the same plea with perfect justice; for every symbol, even the rudest, was originally made sacred

as the embodiment of some idea, and the spiritual-minded long continue to reverence the adulterated form for what it originally signified.

A transition state, when society is preparing to cast its old skin, is unpleasant and difficult for timid and reverential temperaments. Sacred laws appropriate to one age, do not supply the wants of another age. They become inconvenient or impossible of application when progressive centuries have introduced manifold changes. Theologians of India have expended great learning and patience to make some old maxims of their Sacred Books harmonize with the new wants of society, gradually, though slowly, changing. In the process, several of those maxims have been formally abrogated by legal enactment; others have fallen into disuse, with the remark that "they were doubtless intended for a more perfect state of the world."

Some of the Bramins manifest great earnestness and candour in examining other modes of faith. Among these none have been so remarkable as Rammohun Roy, a wealthy Bramin, born in Bengal, in 1780. He was well acquainted with Sanscrit, Hebrew, Persian, Arabic, Greek, Latin, and English. While quite young, he published a book, "Against the Idolatry of All Religions." In this he gave great offence to Hindoos and Mahometans, by the freedom with which he animadverted upon what he considered the defects in both their religious systems. His gentle nature was pained but not discouraged by the enmity he excited. In 1816 he translated the more spiritual portions of the Vedas from Sanscrit into Hindostanee and Bengalee, two of the most widely spread languages of Hindostan, and circulated them wherever he could, free of cost. In the Preface he says: "I have never ceased to contemplate with the strongest feelings of regret the obstinate adherence of my countrymen to their fatal system of idolatry; violating every humane and social feeling, for the sake of propitiating their supposed deities, especially by dreadful acts of self-destruction, and the immolation of nearest relatives, under the delusion of conforming to sacred

religious rites. In these practices I view with sorrow the moral debasement of a race capable of better things, whose susceptibility, patience, and mildness of character, render them worthy of a happier destiny. Under these impressions, I am impelled to lay before them genuine translations of portions of their own Scriptures, which inculcate not only the enlightened worship of One God, but the purest principles of morality. It seems to me that I cannot better employ my time than in an endeavour to illustrate and maintain truth, and render service to my fellow-creatures; confiding in the mercy of that Being to whom the motives of our actions and the secrets of our hearts are well known."

This attempt to restore the primitive simplicity of the Hindoo religion made Rammohun Roy as unpopular as if he had sought to introduce an entirely new system. But still following the great impulses of his liberal soul, wishing to see all mankind acknowledge themselves children of One Father, he translated an abridgment of the Vedanta into English; in order, as he says in the Preface, to prove to his European friends "that the superstitious practices which deform the Hindoo religion have nothing to do with the pure spirit of its dictates." He says: "By taking the path which conscience and sincerity direct, I, born a Bramin, have exposed myself to the complaints and reproaches even of some of my relations, whose prejudices are strong, and whose temporal advantages depend upon the present system of idolatry. But these, however accumulated, I can tranquilly bear; trusting that a day will arrive when my humble endeavours will be viewed with justice, perhaps acknowledged with gratitude."

He studied the Christian Scriptures with profound attention, and held their maxims in great veneration. But the mischiefs he had seen result from a plurality of gods, led him to reject the doctrine of the Trinity, which he saw would inevitably degenerate into a new form of Polytheism, if received into minds trained like the Hindoos. But he believed that Christ was pre-existent, and of a nature superior to angels, which is extremely analogous to ideas

entertained by various Hindoo sects concerning their own saints. He translated into Sanscrit and Bengalee the parables and moral teachings of Christ, entitled "The Precepts of Jesus, the Guide to Peace and Happiness." He omitted the miracles and doctrinal portions of the Gospels. In the Introduction he says: "Belief in a Supreme Superintending Power, the author and preserver of this harmonious system, prevails generally; being derived either from tradition and instruction, or from an attentive survey of the wonderful skill and contrivance displayed in the works of nature. A due estimation of that law which teaches man to do unto others as he would be done by, is also partially taught in every system of religion with which I am acquainted; but it is principally inculcated by Christianity. This essential characteristic of the Christian religion I was for a long time unable to distinguish as such, amid the various *doctrines* I found insisted on in the writings and conversation of Christians. I feel persuaded that the moral precepts of the New Testament, separated from other matters contained in that book, will be more likely to improve the hearts and minds of men of different persuasions and degrees of understanding. The historical, and some other portions, are liable to the doubts and disputes of free-thinkers and anti-Christians; especially the miraculous relations, which are much less wonderful than the fabricated tales handed down to the natives of Asia, and consequently apt at best to carry little weight with them. The Hindoos have records of wonderful miracles performed by their saints and incarnated gods, in the presence of cotemporary friends and enemies, the wise and the ignorant, the select and the multitude. The orthodox sects can even support them with authorities from their inveterate enemies, the Jains, who acknowledge entirely the truth of these miracles, and only differ in maintaining that the power to perform them was derived from Evil Spirits, while the orthodox believe it was given by the Supreme Deity. But moral doctrines, tending evidently to the peace and harmony of mankind at large, are beyond



the reach of metaphysical perversion, and intelligible alike to learned and unlearned. This simple code of religion and morality is so well fitted to regulate the conduct of the human race, in the discharge of their various duties to God and society; it is so admirably calculated to elevate their minds to high and liberal ideas of One God, who has equally subjected all living creatures to disappointment, pain, and death, without distinction of caste, rank, or wealth, and equally admitted all as partakers of the bountiful mercies he has lavished over nature, that I cannot but hope the best effects from its promulgation in the present form."

Doubtless seed scattered from such friendly motives will produce good fruit in the great harvest-field of the future. But during the life-time of Rammohun Roy his suppression of the miracles, and the reasons assigned for it, involved him in protracted controversies with Christian missionaries, and occasioned, as he says, "much coolness toward him in the demeanour of some whose friendship he held very dear." At the same time, his high estimate of the Christian religion rendered him an object of persecution to his own countrymen. They instituted legal proceedings to deprive him of caste; but he was enabled to defeat them by his profound knowledge of Hindoo law.

In 1833 he was induced to visit England; and on that distant shore his great soul departed from its earthly habitation. When he found himself dangerously ill, he deemed it prudent to guard against further attacks on his property and the caste of his children. He therefore called his Hindoo servant and charged him to observe well all his words and actions, that on his return to India he might testify he had never changed his religion or forfeited his caste. For the same reasons, he expressed a wish not to be buried in a Christian cemetery. His remains were accordingly placed in a grove belonging to the house where he died.

The followers of the Braminical religion are computed at over one hundred and fifty millions.

## EGYPT.

"The faculty of reverence is inherent in all men, and its natural exercise is always to be sympathized with, irrespective of its objects. I did not wait till I went to Egypt, to become aware that every permanent reverential observance has some great idea at the bottom of it; and that it is our business not to deride, or be shocked at the method of *manifestation*, but to endeavour to apprehend the *idea* concerned."—H. MARTINEAU.

HISTORY and poetry have preserved traditions of an extraordinary race of men, called Ethiopians. The name is from Greek words signifying burnt faces; and the ancients appear to have applied it to people browned by the sun, whether their complexions were black, or merely dark. According to a map made to represent the ideas of Herodotus concerning the world, as expressed in his History, about four hundred years before our era, there were two nations of Ethiopians; one in Asia, on the banks of the Indus, another in the northern portion of Africa. There is evidence that these people were powerful and illustrious, as far back as the Trojan war, about one thousand one hundred and eighty-four years before our era. Memnon then reigned over them, and it is recorded that he assisted Priam, king of Troy, against the invasion of the Greeks. Homer calls them "the blameless men;" and relates that Jupiter, at certain seasons of the year, left Olympus and went to spend twelve days in that pious and hospitable region. Egyptian annals are full of allusions to them. Persia, and other old Asiatic nations, mingle Ethiopian legends with songs composed in honour of their own heroes. Herodotus says they worshipped the gods with extremest veneration. The ancient historian, Diodorus Siculus, declares that they were the religious parents

of the Egyptians, the inventors of pomps, sacrifices, and solemn assemblies. The Hebrew poets generally mention Ethiopia in connection with Egypt. Isaiah speaks of "the labour of Egypt, and the merchandise of Ethiopia." Jeremiah describes "the mighty men, Ethiopians and Libyans, that handle the shield," as coming forth with the Egyptians to battle. Ezekiel says: "Great pain shall be in Ethiopia, when the slain shall fall in Egypt." It is recorded that Meroë was the capital of the ancient Ethiopia in Africa. Current tradition declared that Thoth, whom Greeks called Hermes, founded this state, more than five thousand two hundred years ago; and the date is said to be authenticated by a very old astronomical observation. Traditions handed down by the Egyptian priesthood agreed that in Meroë was laid the foundation of the most ancient states of Egypt. Thebes, the first civilized state of Egypt, is believed to have been founded by a colony from thence. The obscurity which rests on this part of history has been somewhat enlightened within the last century, by the discovery of the site of ancient Meroë, in the country now called Sennaar, and comprised within African Ethiopia on the map marked according to Herodotus. Many small pyramids were found there, which, from their number, are supposed to indicate a burial-place. They are constructed like the Hindoo pyramids, fronting the east, and the four sides facing the four cardinal points. They have external marks of greater age than the huge pyramids at Memphis. Herodotus says: "The only gods worshipped in Meroë are Ammon and Osiris. They have also an oracle of Ammon, and undertake their expeditions when and how the god commands." The temple where these oracles were delivered is recorded to have been in the desert, at a little distance from the city. Modern travellers have discovered the ruins of a temple in the desert, near the collection of small pyramids. Rams' horns are sculptured in many places on the stones; and the ram is well known to have been an emblem sacred to Ammon, and the distinguishing mark of his temples. In the inmost sanctuary of these

temple was a Sacred Ship, enclosed in a shrine, and screened by a veil. When the oracle was to be consulted, a procession of priests carried about this Ship, in its portable sanctuary, placed on poles, which they rested on their shoulders. From certain movements of the ship, during their religious ceremonies, omens were gathered, according to which the High Priest delivered the oracle.

The government of Meroë was in the hands of a caste of priests, who, guided by the oracle, selected one of their own order for king. When this choice was announced to the people, they fell down and adored him, as the representative of their god Ammon, who had appointed him to rule over them. He was obliged to live and govern according to laws prescribed by the priests. When the oracle indicated that a change of rulers was necessary, the High Priest sent a messenger that the god commanded him to die, and that mortals must not seek to evade divine decrees.

Whence did this powerful priesthood come? Many learned men maintain that they came from that part of Ethiopia said to be on the banks of the Indus; that is, from Indus-stan, which we call Hindostan. The points of resemblance between the opinions and customs of India and Egypt are too numerous and too obvious to be overlooked by any one who even glances at the subject. Some scholars, with less probability on their side, maintain that Egypt is the oldest, and that Hindostan was settled by colonies from thence. One thing is certain and undisputed, namely, that a very ancient and very intimate relation existed between the two countries. Meroë, by its location, was the centre of a great caravan trade known to have been carried on in very early ages, between India and Egypt and Arabia. It has been already stated that the Pouranas of Hindostan contain records of two remarkable emigrations from that country to Egypt, at a very remote period. The first were the "Yadavas, or sacred race," who fled from the oppressions of Cansa, the same tyrant who caused so many children to be slaughtered when he



was seeking the life of Crishna. The date they assign to this event agrees very well with the date which tradition ascribes to the first settlement at Meroë; and the Yadavas are conspicuous in the history of Crishna. The other emigration recorded in the Pouranas is that of powerful tribes, called Pali, or Shepherds, who governed from Indus to Ganges, and enlarged their empire by conquests in Misrastahn [their word for the Land of Egypt], where one of their princes became so wealthy that "he raised three mountains, one of gold, one of silver, and one of gems." This is supposed by some to describe the three great Pyramids, at Memphis, one of which was originally overlaid with white marble, another with yellow marble, and the third with spotted marble, of fine grain, susceptible of exquisite polish. Many scholars consider the Pali identical with the powerful tribes of Asiatic Ethiopians, described by Herodotus, and supposed to dwell on the banks of the Indus. Others conjecture they were Assyrians, or Phœnicians. Manetho, who was High Priest at Heliopolis in Egypt, about three hundred and four years before the Christian era, wrote a history of Egypt from the earliest times, in the Greek language. He professed to have taken it from inscriptions engraved by Thoth, or Hermes, on stone pillars, in the sacred characters. These he declares were afterward written in books, and laid up in the inmost recesses of the temples, to which he, of course, had access. A few fragments of Manetho's History have been handed down to us. In these it is stated that Egypt was overrun "by a race of Shepherds from the East," in the reign of their king Timæus; which some computations place four thousand two hundred and sixty years ago, and others much earlier. He informs us that some said these invaders were Arabians.

Among the proofs of a very intimate connection, in some way, between India and Egypt, the following may be mentioned. In both countries there was a powerful hereditary priesthood, who had exclusive possession of the Sacred Books, and of all the learning extant in their time; con-

sequently, they were the only judges, physicians, and astronomers. In both countries, the religion of the priests was carefully kept secret from the people; and the consequence was that the most grotesque and monstrous forms appeared on the surface of society, while high spiritual allegories and profound metaphysical inquiries were concealed behind the veil. Both countries were originally governed by priests, and afterward kings were chosen from the warrior caste, but were regulated and controlled by the priests. In both countries society was divided into castes, of which the sacerdotal was the highest. In both, the priests married, but there was no female priesthood. Both had a language for sacred purposes, which was different from the vernacular tongue. Both believed that bathing in holy rivers, or being drowned in them, would confer peculiar sanctity. Both believed there was an immense reservoir of waters above the firmament, whence those rivers flowed. Both believed in a fifth element above our atmosphere, called ether, which the gods breathed, as mortals breathe air. In both places, priests taught to the higher castes that all souls emanated from One Universal Soul, in successive gradations. Both taught that there were ascending spheres of existence above this earth. Both taught the transmigration of human souls into animals. The same animals were considered sacred in both places. There was similarity in their religious festivals and processions, especially in the custom of carrying their sacred images from one temple to another, in great four-wheeled cars. The architecture of ancient Egypt bore a striking resemblance to that of India. Both suggested the idea of grottoes or caverns, and were characterized by the same style of ornaments. The pyramid was a form prescribed for sacred buildings in both countries, therefore a truncated pyramid generally formed the main entrance to the temples. There was always a sanctuary into which none but the priests entered, and the outer courts were for the people. Both decorated their temples with flags on festival occasions. Both made similar offerings to the gods. The trial of

departed souls by the Judge of the Dead is sculptured on Hindoo and Egyptian walls, and they are so similar that one might be mistaken for the other. Their astronomical systems were alike. They represented the signs of the zodiac by the same emblems, consecrated a day to each of the seven planets successively, and made the same calculations concerning alternate destructions and reproductions of this world. It is said by the learned, that the Egyptian language bears very few and slight analogies to the Sanscrit; and no traces of the hieroglyphic writing have yet been discovered in India. But Bruce, the traveller, says that the language spoken at Masuah, not far from Meroë, is substantially Sanscrit. Many places mentioned by Mungo Park, in his Second Journey to Africa, have Sanscrit names, which are actually current in India at the present day. The Nile was formerly designated by a Sanscrit word, signifying dark blue; and the same name was anciently given to the river Indus. Alexander the Great thought he had discovered the source of the Nile in India. He was probably misled by the coincidence of names, and the crocodiles and lotus-blossoms, which abounded in both rivers. Blumenbach, the celebrated naturalist, had in his possession the skull of an Egyptian mummy, and of a Hindoo; and he said they bore a more striking resemblance to each other than any other two skulls in his collection. Paintings on the walls convey the same idea of similarity in their persons. In both places, the higher castes are represented with a lighter and brighter colour than the lower, who are more darkened by exposure to sun and wind. Denon says the pictures of couches, chairs, and other articles in ancient Egyptian tombs, obviously indicate that they were made of a species of wood brought from India.

If the Egyptians still existed as a nation, and had preserved their old customs and Sacred Books, as the Hindoos have done, it would doubtless be easy to find many more resemblances. But Egypt has passed away from the face of the earth, and only by persevering industry has learning been able to trace a few of her footsteps. What we know

of her history and opinions is mainly derived from the testimony of wise and illustrious men, who were drawn thither by her renown for knowledge in arts, sciences, and religious mysteries. Abraham is supposed to have lived nearly four thousand years ago. That Egypt was already famous in his time is testified by Josephus, historian of the Jews, who informs us that Abraham went down thither, to become an auditor of the priests, and compare their religious ideas with his own.

Herodotus, the oldest Greek historian, visited Egypt about four hundred and forty-eight years before Christ, to collect materials from the priests, who were celebrated for having carefully preserved the records of past ages. His history has come down safely to the present time.

In less than a hundred years after, Plato, the most celebrated of the Greek philosophers, was drawn to Egypt by the renown of priestly schools at Heliopolis, and resided there several years. Many of his writings are preserved, and they contain frequent allusions to the Egyptians.

Strabo, author of a Greek geographical work, describing the manners and customs of different nations, went to Egypt about fifty years after the Christian era. Heliopolis, eclipsed by the new city of Alexandria, was then going to decay, and the priests were no longer among the most learned of their age; but they talked of departed glory, and pointed out to him their once famous schools, and the house where Plato had resided. This book is also extant.

The ancient Egyptian priests claimed immense antiquity for their country. They told Herodotus that Egypt was originally governed by gods; of whom there first reigned a series of eight, then a series of twelve, then a series of twelve more; that these rulers had uniformly one Superior among them; and the last of them were Osiris and his son Horus. By this government of gods it is naturally supposed they meant successive orders of priests, each with a Sovereign Pontiff, bearing the name of the deity to whose service he was devoted, and by whose oracular directions



he professed to govern. Thus if a priest of Ammon was chosen ruler, they called it being governed by Ammon; if a priest of Osiris was elected, they called it the government of Osiris. From the reign of Osiris to their king Amasis, they reckoned fifteen thousand years; and Amasis reigned five hundred and sixty-nine years before Christ. Herodotus says: "On this subject, the Egyptians have no doubts; for they profess to have always computed the years, and to have kept written accounts of them with the minutest accuracy." It was customary for every high priest of Ammon during his life-time to deposit in the great temple at Thebes a statue of himself. They pointed out to Herodotus three hundred and forty one of these colossal wooden images, assuring him that no one of them was the statue of a god, but all were mortal men, and priests, in a direct line of succession from father to son; all of them after the reign of the gods. Allowing three generations of men to be equal to one hundred years, he computed that this succession required an interval of eleven thousand three hundred and forty years.

We are in the habit of calling the Greeks the ancients, but they considered themselves a nation of yesterday compared with the Egyptians. Plato visited Egypt about three hundred years later than Solon, the lawgiver of Athens; and he informs us that when Solon inquired of the priests concerning ancient affairs, he perceived that, compared with them, neither he nor any other of the Greeks had any knowledge of very remote antiquity. When he began to discourse concerning what seemed to him the most ancient events, such as the Deluge of Deucalion, one of the oldest of the priests exclaimed: "Solon, Solon, you Greeks are always children. All your souls are juvenile; neither containing any ancient opinion derived from remote tradition, nor any discipline hoary from its existence in remote periods of time. You mention one deluge only, whereas many have happened."

These statements of Egyptian priests are rejected as fabulous; but the great antiquity of their country is proved

beyond dispute by sculptures and hieroglyphic writing, cut into the solid rock of ancient temples, tombs, and palaces. The dry climate and sandy soil were favourable to their preservation. There was no frost to heave them, no rainy season to corrode the durable material. For centuries after this wonderful people had passed away, their gigantic memorials stood in the solitude of waste places, seldom seen by the eye of man. The marvellous accounts of travellers at last attracted general attention toward them, and within the last half century, France and England have devoted much money and learning to the careful investigation of these stupendous monuments. The task was attended with difficulties apparently insurmountable; for the secret of hieroglyphic writing had been lost for ages, and no man could reveal it. But when the French army were digging the foundations of a fort, at Rosetta, in Egypt, they found a large block of stone containing an inscription in three different characters; one in Greek, one in the common Egyptian writing, and one in the sacred characters used only by the priests. Underneath them all, it was recorded that the same inscription had been ordered to be engraved in three forms. The Greek language was familiar to scholars, and a clue to the other unknown characters was thus obtained. But the stone was much mutilated, and though several names remained in the Greek portion, unfortunately only that of Ptolemy remained in hieroglyphics. The base of an obelisk, with an inscription in Greek and in hieroglyphics, was afterward discovered at Philæ. The names of Ptolemy and Cleopatra in hieroglyphics were well preserved, and the letters common to both were written in the same manner; they were therefore concluded to be signs of sound, which we call letters. This feeble ray of light was applied by learned men of different nations, with inconceivable perseverance and ingenuity. One after another added something to the stock of knowledge, until at last an available system was formed. The Coptic language is a relic of the old vernacular tongue of Egypt, and various writings were preserved in it. M.

Champollion, an acute Frenchman, had studied it almost from boyhood, and was thus enabled to bring another ray of light to the investigation of hieroglyphics. He discovered that the alphabet consisted of images of external objects, and represented the first letter of that object's name in the common Egyptian language; as if in English we should make a dog for D, a cat for C, and a serpent for S. Many and great difficulties remained. One of the most troublesome was the custom of omitting vowels in hieroglyphics, and writing only the consonants. Without attempting to give a detailed account of the numerous obstacles, it is sufficient to say that by great learning, labour, and patience, several inscriptions on the ancient monuments have been satisfactorily deciphered.

On a stone tablet discovered at Karnak are engraved the names of a successive series of sixty-one kings. We suppose that Moses lived about three thousand four hundred and forty-nine years ago; and the latest of these kings was prior to the date we assign to Moses.

Several ancient authors agree in testifying that Menei, commonly called Menes, was the first king; and their statement has been confirmed by engravings on monuments, and writings on papyrus. Menei is an abbreviation of Amun-ei, signifying "he who walks with Amun;" by which his cotemporaries understood "he who walks with God." According to Manetho's list of kings, he reigned seven thousand seven hundred and sixteen years ago. The statements of that old historian concerning many of the later kings, though long doubted, have of late years been remarkably corroborated by the monuments; but his testimony with regard to Menes is rejected. Josephus says this ancient king lived more than one thousand three hundred years before Solomon, who was born one thousand thirty-three years before Christ. Some modern scholars carry the date of Menes as far back as two thousand eight hundred and ninety years before our era; others bring it as near to it as two thousand two hundred years. The learned on this subject suppose two thousand seven hun-

dred and fifty years before Christ to be a near approximation to the truth.

The Italian Marquis Spineto, who carefully investigated this subject, says: "The first period of Egyptian history begins with the establishment of their government, and comprehends the time from Misraim to Menes, during which all religious and political authority was in the hands of the priesthood, who laid the first foundation of the future power of Egypt, founding and embellishing the great city of Thebes, building magnificent temples, and instituting the Mysteries of Isis."

The ancient religion of Egypt, like that of Hindostan, was founded on astronomy, and eminently metaphysical in its character. In common with other oriental nations, they supposed the origin of the world was from a dark chaos. Soul existed from eternity, and by its action upon Matter, chaos was brought into form, and out of darkness beamed forth light. The fiery particles ascended and formed the firmament of luminaries; the heavier portions descended, and formed earth and sea, whence animals and plants proceeded. From the Eternal Soul were evolved successive emanations of Spiritual Intelligences, more or less elevated in character and office, according to their nearness or remoteness from the Central Source.

The Source of Being was never represented by any painting or sculpture. Those who understood the religion of Egypt, considered the deities mere emblematical representations of his various attributes. The first emanation from him was Amun, whom Greeks called Jupiter Ammon. He was supposed to dwell in a radiant upper sphere, far above the subordinate deities. He is described as "The Male Origin of all things;" "The Spirit of the Supreme, moving on the face of the waters;" "The Spirit who animates and perpetuates the world, by mixing himself with all its parts;" "He who brings to light hidden things;" "Lord of the Three Regions;" "The King of Gods." His image was always painted dark blue, and represented with a Ram's head and horns; probably with



some reference to the constellation, which bears that name; therefore a ram's head became a sacred amulet, worn by the devout as a protection against evil. As Creative Wisdom, he was named Amun-Cneph. As the Intellectual, or Spiritual Sun, he was called Amun-Ra. His worship was universal, but he was peculiarly the presiding deity of Thebes, which was founded by a colony from Meroë.

Tradition declared that the Ethiopians were his first worshippers; and it is supposed that Homer's legend concerning Jupiter's visit to "the blameless men," had reference to an annual procession of the priests of Jupiter Ammon at Thebes, up the Nile to some place consecrated by the worship their ancestors had offered. The image of the god was probably carried on a great car, according to Hindoo custom.

Phtha, belonging to the higher class of gods, was called the son of Amun Cneph, and said to have proceeded from an egg formed by him. To Phtha was attributed the invention of science, by which the laws of nature were arranged. He was considered the founder of the dynasties of Egypt: therefore kings often took the title "Beloved of Phtha." In the royal city of Memphis, which was consecrated to him, he had a magnificent temple, splendidly adorned, where the grand ceremony of the inauguration of Egyptian kings was performed with great pomp.

Of all Egyptian deities, Osiris is the name most familiar to modern ears. He was formerly supposed to be a mere representation of the visible sun; but increasing knowledge on the subject proves that he embodied a more comprehensive idea. It has been already shown how the Hindoo mind deified the active and passive powers of generation. The same tendency was manifested in Egypt. Osiris did not represent this power in any one department of nature. He appears to have been, like Siva in his genial capacity, The Fructifying Power of the Universe. The emblems of the sun were sacred to him, and astronomical ceremonies of worship typified him as the sun, to whose rays the earth owes her fruitfulness. His worship

was mingled with that of the god of their holy river, named Nilus; and the sculptures often represent him as sprinkling manure on the earth, because to his pervading warmth the river, at its annual overflow, owes its fertilizing power. Because plants cannot germinate without water, vases full of it were carried at the head of processions in honour of Osiris, and his votaries refrained from destroying or polluting any spring. This reverence for the production of Life introduced into his worship the sexual emblem so common in Hindostan. A colossal image of this kind was presented to his temple in Alexandria, by king Ptolemy Philadelphus. Crowned with gold, and surmounted by a golden star, it was carried in a splendid chariot in the midst of religious processions. A Serpent, the emblem of Immortality, always accompanies the image of Osiris. The Hawk was considered a bird of the Sun, and was therefore sacred to him; and his body was often represented with the head of a hawk. The emblem which signified his name was the orb of the sun on the head of a hawk. This formed the winged globe, so conspicuous in Egyptian architecture.

Osiris was called "the oldest son of Time, and cousin of the Day." Being a general representative of the Generating Principle, whether existing in sunshine, water, or the production of animal life, there was a mingling of ceremonies and emblems in his worship, which has greatly puzzled those who seek to understand the mythology of Egypt. To increase the difficulty, he is often represented as a beneficent ruler on earth, at whose birth it was said a loud voice proclaimed, "The Lord of the World is born!" He taught men how to prepare corn and cultivate grapes, and went forth to carry arts and agriculture to other nations, leaving his wife Isis to govern in his absence. On his return, his brother Typho, by a successful stratagem, shut him up in a chest and threw him into the sea. Isis wandered about in mourning garments, seeking for the body, which she at last found; but Typho discovered it, and tore it into fourteen pieces. Isis gathered the fragments

and gave them burial. Osiris, having thus performed his benevolent mission on earth, descended into Amenti, the Region of the Dead, and having passed through its stages, ascended to a higher life, where he remained to dispense blessings to the world, in answer to their prayers in his name, and finally to overcome the Evil Principle, that had destroyed him. Henceforth, one of his principal offices was to judge the dead, and rule over that heavenly region where souls of good men were admitted to eternal felicity. It is not easy to determine whether this account is an allegory, containing some hidden meaning, or whether it indicates a belief in the incarnation of Osiris.

He was universally worshipped, but peculiarly at Philœ, where he was supposed to be buried. At stated seasons, the priests went in solemn procession and crowned his tomb with flowers. So sacred was the island, that no one was permitted to approach it without express permission from the priests. Here were celebrated the Great Mysteries of Osiris, carefully guarded from all eyes and ears, save of those who had been initiated by severe probation. In a ruined temple at Philœ is a chamber, on the walls of which the mysterious life of Osiris is represented in a succession of sculptures. Twenty-eight Lotus plants indicate the number of years he was supposed to have lived on earth. His passage from this life is shown by the attendance of deities and genii, that presided over funerals. He is then represented with a crook in one hand, and a flagellum, or whip, in the other, as Judge of the Dead: the office which he held ever after his ascension to a higher life. Champollion says the double destiny of the soul was symbolized by the march of the sun through the upper and lower hemisphere. This might be an additional reason why Osiris, as Judge of Souls and Lord of the Heavenly Region, where they received reward, should have the emblems and worship of the sun. On the walls of ruins in various places occur representations of the dead at their last ordeal. Osiris, seated on his throne, accompanied by Isis, receives a tablet on which the god Thoth has recorded

the actions of the deceased, after they have been weighed in the balance of Thmei, goddess of Truth. Horus, always represented as a child, is sometimes seated on a Lotus before the throne, sometimes on the crook of Osiris. He was the symbol of resuscitation, or new birth; and was placed there to express the Egyptian idea that nothing is ever annihilated; that to die was only to pass into a new form. As Judge of the Dead, who assigned to souls new bodies, celestial or terrestrial, Osiris was the dispenser of Immortal Life, and this was probably the reason why a Serpent was always one of his appendages.

Though he belonged to the third series of gods, he was more revered than even the eight highest deities. Amun Ra is represented in the sculptures as making offerings to him. It was deemed irreverent to utter his name. Herodotus mentions him as "one whose name I am not at liberty to disclose." The most sacred form of oath was, "I swear by him who was buried at Philœ." This peculiar sacredness appears to indicate that he was the only god in their mythology represented as incarnated in a human form, and dwelling among men. Every human soul was considered as an emanation from the Divine Soul, and eternally a portion of it. But that was quite different from the idea of a Deity voluntarily descending from blest abodes, performing a benevolent mission among men, suffering death, and rising again to the higher regions, thence to dispense blessings on his faithful worshippers. This history of the incarnation was one of the most important of their religious mysteries; and so carefully was it guarded by the priests, that little can now be learned of its purport. It may be that some wise and beneficent ruler, perhaps a High Priest of Osiris, was believed to be the Deity himself descended on earth for the benefit of mankind, as Hindoos believed concerning their princes Rama and Crishna. Wilkinson, in his valuable work on the Ancient Egyptians, pronounces the whole story purely allegorical. Herodotus says that when the priests of Amun showed him the three hundred and forty-one



statues, they assured him that every one of them was a man and the son of a man; and "they asserted that during all that time no Deity had appeared in a human form; but they did *not* say the same of the time anterior to that account, or that of the kings who reigned afterward."

The worship of Osiris must have been of extremely ancient date; for he is represented as Judge of the Dead, in sculptures cotemporary with the building of the Pyramids, centuries before Abraham was born. Among the many hieroglyphic titles which accompany his figure in those sculptures, and in many other places on the walls of temples and tombs, are "Lord of Life," "The Eternal Ruler," "Manifester of Good," "Revealer of Truth," "Full of Goodness and Truth."

Ra, the son of Phtha, represented the visible Sun, and presided over the physical universe. Heliopolis, which means the City of the Sun, was consecrated to him. His worship was performed there with great splendour, and his priests were renowned for learning.

The Moon was a masculine deity in Egypt, as in Hindostan. Thoth, whom Greeks call Hermes, is supposed to have represented its beneficent qualities. He also presided over learning, was supposed to impart all mental gifts, and to be the medium of communication between gods and human beings. He is represented as the secretary of Osiris, standing before him with a pen or stylus, in his hand, writing on a tablet. To him are attributed the invention of the alphabet, astronomy, arithmetic, music, dancing, writing, and laws.

Instead of one deity who alternately destroyed and reproduced, like the Hindoo Siva, Egyptians represented the Destroyer as twin brother with Osiris, and named him Typho. He was god of Darkness and Eclipse. All bad influences were attributed to him, such as drought, disease, deluge, and conflagration. The sea was considered under his dominion, on account of its being such a dangerous and destructive element. He is represented in the

sculptures as a frightful monster, with the ravaging hippopotamus for a symbol.

Among the goddesses, the highest was Neith, who reigned inseparably with Amun in the upper sphere. She was called "Mother of the Gods;" "Mother of the Sun." She was the feminine origin of all things, as Amun was the male origin. She presided over wisdom, philosophy, military tactics, and the moral attributes of the mind. Her symbol was a vulture, by which the Egyptians, for some unknown reason, represented maternity. She held the same rank at Sais that Amun did at Thebes. Her temples there are said to have exceeded in colossal grandeur anything ever before seen. On one of these was the celebrated inscription thus deciphered by Champollion: "I am all that has been, all that is, and all that will be. No mortal has ever raised the veil that conceals me. My offspring is the Sun."

Isis, supposed to be the same as the Hindoo Isa or Isi, was universally worshipped, and held in peculiar reverence, though she belonged to the inferior series of deities. She was the daughter of Time, twin sister and wife of Osiris, with whom she is everywhere inseparably united. It was formerly supposed she signified the Moon; but her office, like that of Osiris, was much more extensive than the benefits of any one luminary. She was the universal Passive Principle of Generation, as he was the Active Principle. She was the recipient, or mould, of the Life he imparted. To her was ascribed the *form* of all good in the universe, as to Osiris was ascribed the *soul* of all good. She was Nature, the fruitful mother and nurse, containing within herself germs of the reproduction of all forms of life. Hence her symbol was the egg. Both she and Osiris are frequently represented holding the Egyptian Cross, Emblem of Life. This universal benefactress is said to have had ten thousand titles; the most common was the Potent Mother Goddess. She presided over agriculture, and men no longer butchered each other after she had revealed to them the valuable qualities of wheat and barley, which had till then grown

wild ; therefore they presented to her the first sheaves of their harvests as an offering. The dew that refreshed the earth was venerated as the tears of Isis, in memory of her lost Osiris. A ship was carried in the celebration of her festivals ; perhaps to indicate that her worship was imported into Egypt. As goddess of health, she was believed to heal human diseases. Many medicines continued to be called by her name, even as late as the time of Galen, a famous Greek physician, who lived a hundred and thirty-one years after Christ. She was particularly worshipped at Memphis, where her Mysteries were celebrated with much pomp and ceremony. The festival continued eight days, during which some of her votaries scourged themselves severely at her altars. The sculptures represent this favourite goddess in a great variety of forms and offices. Sometimes she has a human head with horns, sometimes a cow's head. Sometimes she wears an Egyptian hood, sometimes she is crowned with Lotus blossoms ; often she is shrouded in a dark blue veil. She holds in her hand a staff like a crosier, or a Lotus stem, or the sacred musical instrument called sistrum. Sometimes she is nursing her infant Horus, son of Osiris ; sometimes she has the babe seated on her knee, receiving worship from those around her, with a guardian hawk over her head, encircled by radii of water-plants. This holy family of Egypt seems to have been a favourite subject with those old artists. Sometimes they represent Isis protecting the body of Osiris with her outstretched wings. She is always by his side in Amenti, where he presides as Judge of the Dead. She reigned with him while he was on earth, and when she died, they believed her soul was transferred to Sirius, which they call Sothis. Divine honours were paid to this resplendent star, which was consecrated to Isis, and deemed the Birth Star of our world. At the season when it rose before the sun, and could therefore be visible in its own light, commenced the inundation of the Nile, which spread fertility all over the land. One of the titles of Isis was, "She who rises in the Dog Star." Prayers addressed

to her were believed to have great efficacy. Plutarch relates that Garmathone, Queen of Egypt, having lost her son, prayed fervently to Isis, at whose intercession Osiris descended to the region of departed souls, and restored the prince to life.

Egyptians believed in a host of subordinate deities, with attendant genii in each department. The twelve months were governed by the Spirits of the twelve signs of the zodiac. Each day was under the guardianship of the planet to which it was consecrated. The stars were animated with Souls, supposed to take an active interest in the affairs of this world. In hieroglyphic writing, a Star signifies a Ministering Spirit. Canopus, God of Waters, was an object of grateful worship; so was old Nilus, the deity of their fertilizing river, who was always represented by a black image. Kham, with the goddess Ranno, presided over the fruitfulness of Gardens and Vineyards. Her symbol was a small serpent, which they, as well as the Hindoos, supposed to protect such places. Anouké, guardian of purity and household ties, is represented with a Lotus in one hand, and the Emblem of Life in the other. Every human being had an attendant Spirit, from birth to death. Beneficent Spirits preserved health; evil ones entered into men, and produced fits and other diseases. Air, earth, water, stones, plants, and animals, were all supposed to be under the influence of genii, good or bad.

Reverence for the mystery of organized life led to the recognition of a masculine and feminine principle in all things, spiritual or material. Every elemental force was divided into two, the parents of other forces. The active wind was masculine, the passive mist, or inert atmosphere, was feminine. Rocks were masculine, the productive earth feminine. The presiding deity of every district was represented as a Triad, or Trinity. At Thebes, it was Amun, the creative Wisdom; Neith, the spiritual Mother; and a third, supposed to represent the Universe. At Philœ, it was Osiris, the Generating Cause; Isis, the Receptive Mould; and Horus, the result. The sexual emblems



everywhere conspicuous in the sculptures of their temples would seem impure in description, but no clean and thoughtful mind could so regard them while witnessing the obvious simplicity and solemnity with which the subject is treated.

Concerning future states of existence, they held views very similar to those taught by the Bramins. The human soul was regarded as an emanation from the Universal Soul, and a portion of him. It had fallen from a state of purity and bliss, and was sent into this world for expiation. Eventually, it would be absorbed in the Eternal Source, after many transmigrations through a great variety of forms. Herodotus says, "The Egyptians are the first of mankind who asserted that the soul of man is immortal. When the body perishes, they believe it enters the form of a newly-born animal; but when it has passed through all animals of the earth, water, and air, it again returns to a human body. They affirm that this series of transmigrations is completed in three thousand years."

The expression of Herodotus seems to imply return to a *new* human body. But it is generally supposed that they expected the soul would come back, at the end of that period, to the same body it formerly inhabited; and there seems no other way of accounting for the great care and expense bestowed on embalming the dead, the size and magnificence of the tombs built for their reception, and the numerous convenient and valuable articles usually deposited therein.

Diodorus Siculus says: "The Egyptians consider this life as of very trifling consequence, and they therefore value in proportion a quiet repose after death. This leads them to consider the habitations of the living as mere lodgings, in which as travellers they put up for a short time; while they call the sepulchres of the dead everlasting dwellings, because the dead continue in the grave such an immeasurable length of time. They therefore pay but little attention to the building of their houses, but bestow cost and care, scarcely credible, upon their sepulchres."

Before a funeral, a tribunal of forty members was assembled to inquire into the character of the deceased, and decide whether he was worthy of burial. Every one was free to appear as accuser, but false charges were severely punished. If the departed one was adjudged worthy of sepulture, deities were invoked to receive him among the just, and with many solemn ceremonies he was consigned to the tomb.

All the dead, both men and women, were spoken of as Osiriana; by which they intended to signify "gone to Osiris." Their belief in One Supreme Being, and the immortality of the soul, must have been very ancient; for on a monument, which dates ages before Abraham, is found this epitaph: "May thy soul attain to the Creator of all mankind." Sculptures and paintings in these grand receptacles of the dead, as translated by Champollion, represent the deceased ushered into the world of spirits by funeral deities, who announce, "A soul arrived in Amenti!" Forty two Assessors of the Dead presided over the forty-two sins to which Egyptians believed human beings were subject. Each of these assessors in turn question the spirit that has just parted from its body: "Have you blasphemed? Have you stolen sacred property? Have you lied? Have you been licentious? Have you shaken your head at the words of truth?" (meaning, "Have you been sceptical?") Thoth produces the Book of Life, on which he has recorded the moral life of this soul. The symbols of his actions are put in scales of Thmei, Goddess of Truth and Justice, "who weighs hearts in the balance; no sinner escapes her." These records are presented to Osiris the Judge, and if they are favourable, he raises his sceptre as a signal to pass into the abodes of the blest. Little is now known concerning the nature of the happiness supposed to be in those regions. It is mentioned that Osiris ordered the names of some souls to be written on the Tree of Life, the fruit of which made those who ate it to become as gods. Rather more is known concerning the nature and degrees of punishment. They believed there

were three zones for the residence of souls. The lowest was this earth, a zone of trial; the second was the zone of the air, perpetually convulsed by winds and storms, a place of temporary punishment; the third and highest was an ethereal zone of rest and peace. In several of the sculptures there are indications of punishment by transmigration into inferior forms. Spineto speaks of one, where, on a flight of steps, which formed a communication between Amenti and the world, the deceased was represented in the form of a dog, with his tail between his legs, striving to escape from the god Anubis, who was driving him back to this world. Harriet Martineau thus describes another which she examined: "A hopeless-looking pig, with a bristling back, was in a boat, the stern of which was toward the heavenly regions. Two monkeys were with it, one at the bow, the other whipping or driving the pig. This was a wicked soul sent back to earth under the conduct of the agents of Thoth. The busy and gleeful look of the monkeys, and the humbled aspect of the pig were powerfully given. This was the lowest state of the punished soul; but it would have to pass through some very mournful ones, and for a very long time; to be probably a wolf, scorpion, kite, or some other odious creature, in weary succession."

In some of these monuments, the deceased is represented with a chain round his neck, led by a procession of Spirits, each with a star over his head. Progressive states of the soul, after it leaves this lower zone, are indicated by a series of twelve small apartments, the entrance of each guarded by a Serpent, with his name over him, and the inscription, "He dwells above this great door, and opens it to the God Sun." According to Champollion, one series of these abodes bear this inscription: "These hostile souls see not our god when he casts the rays from his disk; they no longer dwell in the terrestrial world; and they hear not the voice of the great god, when he traverses their zones." Over another series is written: "These have found grace in the eyes of the Great God. They dwell in the abodes of glory; those in which the heavenly life is led. The

bodies which they have abandoned will repose forever in their tombs, while they will enjoy the presence of the Supreme God."

Egyptians considered their own country as peculiarly privileged, and set apart from others. They called it "The Pure Land;" "Region of Justice and Truth." They were extremely courteous to foreigners in all things unconnected with religious scruples; but they considered it unclean to eat or drink with them. They were more partial to the Grecians than any other nation, but they deemed it pollution to kiss a Greek, or touch the knife with which he cut his food, or to use any of his cooking utensils; because Greeks were accustomed to eat the beef of cows, the most sacred of all animals in Egypt. It is recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures that when the brethren of Joseph were invited to eat, "they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians by themselves; because the Egyptians may not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto them." Though Joseph was so high in favour with Pharaoh, he was excluded by the same custom which now prevents wealthy Hindoos from dining at the same table with their British governors.

The idea of successive grades of emanations from the Deity introduced a distinction of castes into Egypt, as it did in Hindostan. Priests and kings were believed to have emanated before labourers, who, on account of being further removed from the Divine Source of Being, were supposed to have received a smaller and more attenuated influence of his Pure Spirit. Priests, warriors, and labourers constituted the principal castes; but the latter were subdivided into various classes. Fishermen, and those who tended herds and flocks, were among the lowest. The caste of swine-herds was the most despised, and their situation seems to have been similar to the wretched Pariahs of Hindostan. They were not allowed to enter the temples, to come in contact with the priests, or to hold any communication with the higher castes. They were obliged to live in places set apart for them, and it was pollution to touch any vessel



they had used. Egyptians supposed that Evil Spirits, and the souls of impure men, entered into swine, which they regarded as the most unclean of all animals. The higher castes had great horror of tasting the flesh, and if they happened to touch the creatures, even by accident, they went through religious purifications to cleanse themselves from pollution. They were, however, necessary; for when they sowed their lands, soaked by inundation of the Nile, herds of swine were driven over the fields, to trample the seed into the earth. Because they thus assisted the Fructifying Principle, a hog was annually sacrificed to Osiris in every house. The soul imprisoned in the pig, for punishment, expiated its sins by being sacrificed; thus a debt of gratitude was paid to the animal.

In addition to pride of caste, there were other reasons for Egyptian prejudice against shepherds. Their policy was opposed to the nomadic life, which they knew was fatal to the progress of civilization; therefore, the descendants of Jacob were required to settle in one territory, which would lead to the necessity of building towns. They had, moreover, a strong national animosity to wandering herdsmen, in consequence of what they had suffered by the irruption of Pali, or Shepherds, from the East. The monarchs, who compelled them to toil in building the great pyramids, were of that odious race. Herodotus says they had such an extreme aversion to their memory, that they avoided mentioning them, and called their pyramids by the name of a shepherd who fed his cattle in those places. Thus there was a threefold reason why Joseph should say, "Shepherds are an abomination unto the Egyptians." They made a distinction in favour of their own herdsmen, who tended cattle connected with agricultural pursuits in their villages. Such men, though humble in rank, were not detested like tribes of roving shepherds. To a certain degree, they were cared for by the priests, who prescribed such food for them as they deemed suitable; bread made of bran, fish, the flesh of some few animals, and barley-beer for drink.

Circumcision, being closely connected with their ideas of

health and cleanliness, was another barrier between Egyptians and foreigners. It is said Pythagoras was obliged to conform to this custom before he could gain admission to their religious Mysteries, and that he nearly died in consequence. Herodotus says: "As this practice can be traced, both in Egypt and Ethiopia, to the remotest antiquity, it is not possible to say which first introduced it. The Phoenicians and the Syrians of Palestine acknowledge that they borrowed it from Egypt. Male children, except in those places which have borrowed the custom from hence, are left as nature formed them." Sir J. G. Wilkinson says: "That this custom was established long before the arrival of Joseph in Egypt is proved by the ancient monuments."

The Egyptian states, like their Ethiopian ancestors at Meroë, were originally governed by priests only. Each district had a High Priest, who reigned in the name of some god, and had subordinate priests under him. The caste of warriors afterward raised themselves to the royal dignity, and Menes was the first king. But though the rulers were thenceforth from the military caste, the priests kept them in almost complete dependence. They were not allowed to administer punishments according to their own will, or judgment, but in conformity to laws which the gods had prescribed through the medium of priests. They had constant supervision over affairs of the State and the army; they made daily regulations concerning religious ceremonies to be performed by the royal household, and even concerning the food upon their tables. None but the sons of High Priests were allowed to be in attendance upon the king's person. Before he could be anointed, he was required to enter the priesthood, and be initiated into their religious mysteries. He was called Phra, which signifies of the Sun. In this manner was indicated the divine origin of government, and the universal and equal beneficence which ought to characterize it. The hieroglyphic title of kings was "Son of the Sun." Phra, which we call Pharaoh, was applied to all their monarchs as the title of Czar is to the Emperor of Russia; hence, it is often diffi-

cult to ascertain which particular Pharaoh is meant on the monumental records.

Not only was the priest caste generally hereditary, but also the priesthood of each particular deity; and in each of these orders the High Priesthood descended lineally in some particular family. The son of a priest at Memphis could not become a member of the college of priests at Heliopolis, and a priest at Thebes could not join the sacerdotal order at Memphis. This arose from the fact that each temple had large landed property attached to it, to defray the expenses of religious service. The revenues were drawn by priests, and transmitted to their posterity as a perpetual inheritance. These extensive estates were let out to the subordinate castes, and the rents formed a treasury for the common use of the sacerdotal order belonging to the temple. From this fund, priests and their families were supplied with free tables. In addition to this fixed income, there were the daily sacrifices and offerings of fruit and grain at the temples; they also carried on many profitable branches of business, in consequence of being the only depositories of such knowledge as existed. Herodotus says: "So many dishes were furnished daily of those kinds of meat which their laws allowed them to eat, and a certain quantity of wine; for they had the privilege of enjoying that luxury, which was forbidden to the lower castes. Thus there was no need for them to contribute anything from their private means toward their own support." The priestly families were in fact the highest and wealthiest in the country, except the king. They were exempted from taxation, and it is said that one-third of the land of Egypt was allotted to them. When Joseph bought up the lands, it is recorded that he left the portion of the priests untouched. The places of interment belonged to them, and as the use of them was paid for, they must have been sources of considerable emolument.

As the civil law was included in the Sacred Books, priests were the only judges. The Chief Judge, who was also High Priest, wore a golden chain on which was sus-

pended an image of Thmei, Goddess of Truth and Justice, graven on a sapphire, and set round with precious stones of various colours. He pronounced his decision by touching the successful applicant with this figure. Several representations of these breast-plates are extant in European museums, or to be seen on Egyptian monuments. Some of them contained two figures, an image of Ra, the Sun, and of Thmei; the signification being Light and Truth, or Light and Justice.

Priests were also the only physicians. They prescribed the articles of food to be used by each class of people; and according to the testimony of Herodotus the Egyptians were remarkably healthy. Each part of the body was believed to be under the especial care of some particular deity, who must be invoked, with prescribed offerings and ceremonies, in case of disease. Invalids were carried to the temples, and it was supposed they would be cured, if the priest laid his hands on them, and recited appropriate prayers. They probably had some knowledge valuable for the preservation and restoration of health; for their medical schools became renowned. There are indications that some of their remedies were of a magnetic nature. Solon, who had been in Egypt, says, "Touching with the hands will immediately restore health." Æschylus, the famous Greek poet, makes one of his characters in the tragedy of Prometheus say, when speaking of the shores of the Nile, "There Jupiter Ammon will render you sane, stroking you with gentle hand, and simply touching you." A high degree of cleanliness, both in person and clothing, was a distinguishing characteristic of the ancient Egyptians; habits which they doubtless owed to the instructions of their priests.

As all the sciences were deemed direct revelations from the gods, a degree of sacredness was attached to knowledge, of which we in modern times can form no idea. Such learning as the priests had, manifested itself in results which seemed to the uninitiated like divination and magic. Perhaps they themselves, with the scanty information of



that time, and their reverential Egyptian tendencies, thought many things miraculous, which to us would appear very simple. Whether they were honest or not, in assuming to be supernaturally gifted, the people most devoutly believed they had magical power to bring birds from the air at their bidding, to lure serpents from their hiding-places, to cast out Evil Spirits, and cure the diseases. They placed the utmost reliance on their interpretation of dreams, their predictions from the aspect of the stars, and the prophecies they made from examining the entrails of victims sacrificed to the gods.

There were many gradations of rank among the priesthood. Those devoted to the service of the great gods were regarded with far more veneration than those who attended upon minor and local deities. Some were distinguished above others by their vocation. There were bands of Musicians among them, trained to chant the hymns, to sing in chorus, to perform on harps, flutes, and a ringing instrument called the sistrum. The skilful among these were held in much honour. But the Prophets were the highest class of priests. On public occasions, they took precedence of all others, except the High Priests of the great temples. They made astronomy their peculiar study. They knew the figure of the earth, and how to calculate solar and lunar eclipses. From very ancient time, they had observed the order and movement of the stars, and recorded them with the utmost care. Ramses the Great, generally called Sesostris, is supposed to have reigned one thousand five hundred years before the Christian era, about coeval with Moses, or a century later. In the tomb of this monarch was found a large massive circle of wrought gold, divided into three hundred and sixty-five degrees, and each division marked the rising and setting of the stars for each day. This fact proves how early they were advanced in astronomy. In their great theories of mutual dependance between all things in the universe was included a belief in some mysterious relation between the Spirits of the Stars and human souls; so that

the destiny of mortals was regulated by the motions of the heavenly bodies. This was the origin of the famous system of Astrology. From the conjunction of planets at the hour of birth, they prophesied what would be the temperament of an infant, what life he would live, and what death he would die. Diodorus, who wrote in the century preceding Christ, says, "They frequently foretell with the greatest accuracy what is about to happen to mankind; showing the failure or abundance of crops, and the epidemic diseases about to befall men or cattle. Earthquakes, deluges, rising of comets, and all those phenomena, the knowledge of which appears impossible to common comprehensions, they foresee by means of their long-continued observations." Plato informs us that they believed this earth had been, and would be, subject to destruction by water and fire; and that the tradition of Phaeton's having borrowed the chariot of the sun, and set the world in flames, contained an historical fact in a fabulous form. The returns of such catastrophes were fixed by them according to the period of their Great Astronomical Year, when the sun, moon, and all the planets returned to the same sign in the zodiac whence they had started. This astronomical cycle included ages in its revolution. In its winter occurred a universal deluge, and in its summer, a conflagration of the world. After this destruction, they believed all things would be renewed, to pass through another succession of changes.

In early times, priests lived with great simplicity. Sometimes they slept on the bare ground, sometimes on mats spread on frames of wicker-work, with a half cylinder of wood for a pillow. They married but one wife, and she was often their sister, on account of the prevailing idea that such marriages were fortunate. They ate very plain food in stated quantities. In very ancient times, the priests, including kings, used no wine; but in later times, a moderate portion, prescribed by law, was dealt to them. Their diet was strictly regulated, so careful were they that "the body should sit light upon the soul." Peas, leeks,

garlic, onions, fish, and salt were forbidden. Pork was their abhorrence, and they had such an aversion to beans that they would not even touch them, or allow them to be sown in Egypt. Their cleanliness was extreme. They shaved their heads, and every three days shaved their whole bodies. They bathed two or three times a day, often in the night also; and the most devout among them used water consecrated to the sacred bird Ibis. They wore garments of white linen, deeming it more cleanly than cloth made from the hair of animals. If they had occasion to wear a woollen cloak or mantle, they put it off before entering a temple; so scrupulous were they that nothing impure should come into the presence of the gods.

There were no priestesses in Egypt, but women were devoted to the service of the temple, the same as in Hindostan, to perform in sacred music and dances, gather fresh flowers for the altars, and feed the consecrated animals. The office was deemed so honourable, that it was reserved for the wives and daughters of kings and priests. The sculptures often represent them assisting in religious ceremonies, or playing on musical instruments in processions to the temple.

Oracles were frequently delivered by women. The daughter of Sesostris is said to have been so skilled in divination, that she foretold to her father his future brilliant success. The monarch, being himself a priest, had access to all their secret sciences; nevertheless, his conduct on important occasions was much influenced by her predictions. Her prophecies were noted and respected in the temple itself.

Oracles were of very remote date. The most ancient was the oracle of Amun at Meroë. There was a very celebrated one at the temple of Amun in Thebes. It was consulted by many nations, and great reliance was placed upon its authority. The divine gift was supposed to be imparted to a woman consecrated to the service of the deity. She slept in the temple where Amun Ra was believed also to be present. Oracles were supposed to be

revealed by dreams in the temples of Osiris, Isis, and Horus. Apis was sometimes consulted. A coin was deposited on his altar, with certain ceremonies and invocations, and the first words, or exclamations, heard afterward were deemed prophetic. In fact, oracles seem to have been the main-spring, that regulated all the machinery of the state.

The reverential tendencies of the Egyptians are manifested in all memorials of their public and private life. The indications of it often show a tendency to excess; probably the result of a fervid African temperament. At some of their religious festivals, the people abandoned themselves to the most tumultuous joy; and the number of their expiatory sacrifices show a tendency to the extremes of penitence. Their kings dwelt in temple-palaces, full of sacred emblems and statues of the gods. No nation ever surpassed them in the grandeur of religious festivals. After a great victory, the king went up to the temple with his whole army to give thanks. Harps, flutes, and the shrill ring of the sistrum, accompanied the chorus of sacred singers, clapping their hands to mark the rhythm. The king rode in a splendid chariot, followed by trains of captives. The priests, in fringed robes of linen, carried banners, shrines, and other sacred emblems. The procession closed with men leading animals for sacrifice, and women carrying incense and flowers. Through long avenues of colossal sphinxes and gigantic statues, they marched up to the temple. The troops drew up in files outside, and when the trumpet announced that the king and priests were offering sacrifice within, they worshipped in regular succession at altars provided for them. They hailed the New Moon and the Full Moon with religious honours, and most of their great festivals occurred at those periods. At Spring time and Harvest they had joyful processions of thanksgiving, leading their children in bands to the temple, with sheaves and flowers for offerings. The Nile was as sacred to them as Ganges to the Hindoos. There is a tradition that in ancient times they had the same custom of offering to the god of the stream a virgin richly



dressed. At a later period, an image of wax was thrown into the river, instead of the human victim. When foreign kings married their princesses, it was customary to send them water from the Nile, however great the trouble or expense might be. At the annual rising of the river, the priests went in grand procession, to strew it with lotus-blossoms, and chant hymns in its praise. They burned frankincense to the Sun, at its rising, meridian, and setting, and offered to it solemn sacrifices on the fourth day of every month. They carried offerings to the temples in token of gratitude for recovery from sickness. They seated an image of the dead at their banquets, to remind them of their own mortality. They built their tombs with upper apartments richly sculptured and painted. There the priests went on stated occasions to perform religious ceremonies, accompanied by relatives bringing offerings to the departed, not to his mortal remains, but to the portion of divinity that was in him, and had gone elsewhere. They consecrated the very rocks with which their sacred edifices were to be built. They dedicated each month and each day to the service of some particular deity. Their ancient attitude of worship was sitting with the thighs resting on the heels. Many of the statues were in this position. The sculptures represent kings and priests worshipping with hands uplifted before their faces, the palms turned toward the deity. Their common oblations were wine, oil, meal, cakes, turtle-doves, young pigeons, fruit, flowers, vases, jewels, or whatever they had vowed. On important occasions they burned incense and sacrificed red bullocks. If a single black hair was found on the animal, or if every hair did not grow in its natural and proper form, the priest rejected it; but if he found it without blemish, he put his seal upon it. Wine was poured on the altar, a fire kindled thereon, and the god solemnly invoked. Then they cut the head from the victim, saying: "If there be any evil to come upon any part of Egypt, may it light on this head." On account of this custom, no Egyptian would eat the head of a beast. If there were Greeks in the market, it was

sold to them; if not, it was thrown into the river. The entrails of the victim were taken out and consulted by the priests for auguries. The legs, shoulders, and loins were cut off for food, and the body was burned as an offering, after being stuffed with bread, honey, figs, raisins, and various aromatics. On some occasions, the spectators scourged themselves while it was burning. The priests commenced the sacrifice after a fast, and finished by feasting on the portions set apart for them.

There was a grand celebration, called the Feast of Lamps, held at Sais, in honour of Neith. Those who did not attend the ceremony, as well as those who did, burned lamps before their houses all night, filled with oil and salt; thus all Egypt was illuminated. It was deemed a great irreverence to the goddess for any one to omit this ceremony.

At Bubastis was an annual festival in honour of its presiding goddess. It was probably connected with some holy object of pilgrimage; for people flocked to it from all parts of the country. It sometimes brought together a concourse of "seven hundred thousand men and women, not to mention children." The Nile, overspread with highly ornamented barges, resembled a floating city, and the air resounded with choruses and musical instruments. When these companies approached a city, they landed to frolic and bandy jests with those on shore. The women danced, played on musical instruments, and sometimes threw aside all their garments.

In autumn, they had mournful processions in search of the lost Osiris, weeping and lamenting as they went. One of the ceremonies was to lead the Sacred Cow seven times round the temple. From the astronomical character of their worship, it is a natural inference that the circuits round the temple, indicated the passage of the sun through the seven signs of the zodiac. When the genial warmth of spring returned, they had joyful processions, exulting over Osiris found.

The twenty-fifth day of December was a festival in honour of the birth-day of Horus. The commemoration of that

day, both in ancient Hindostan and ancient Egypt, was probably owing to the fact that the sun at that period begins to return from the winter solstice.

Of all their religious festivals, none were so grand and solemn as those consecrated to Osiris and Isis, called the Greater and Lesser Mysteries. Little is known of them, on account of the profound secrecy with which they were observed, and the penalty of death which awaited any one who should divulge them. None but priests were initiated, until the later times, and then the exceptions were very rare. The honour of ascending to the Greater Mysteries was difficult to attain, and very highly appreciated. Even a prince could not approach them until he had entered the priesthood; and not all the priests were admitted. The candidates must be of unsullied moral character, and go through a long process of study and purification. When initiation commenced, they were required to prepare themselves by long fasts, and to undergo a series of very severe ordeals, during which they were required to manifest the most perfect obedience and resignation. The blazing suns at midnight, fiery serpents, visions of the gods, and other splendid and sublime pageantry employed during the celebration of these Mysteries, are supposed to have been symbolical of the origin of the soul, its fall to earth, its travels through successive spheres, and final return to its home of tranquil glory. Some of the ceremonies and hymns to the gods, said to have been immodest, doubtless originated in their mystical ideas concerning the masculine and feminine principles that pervade the universe; ideas little likely to be rightly understood or appreciated, when viewed through the medium of modern habits of thought.

In all the religious observances of Egypt, the priests alone understood the meaning of what they witnessed; for great care was taken to hide theological theories under a thick veil of mysterious emblems. They had moreover two sets of written characters. One, called the sacred or sacerdotal writing, was a concise abridgment of the hieroglyphics, applied to all religious and scientific subjects,

and known only to the priests. Another, called the epistolary or common style, was used for social and commercial purposes, and taught only to priests and merchants. If the names of deities occurred, they were always expressed by symbolic characters, not by the letters which formed the name; it being deemed irreverent to write them like other words. Champollion says the name of their principal deity was pronounced by sounds which expressed the written symbol, and were quite different from the holy name itself.

The laws of Egypt were handed down from the earliest times, and regarded with the utmost veneration as a portion of religion. Their first legislator represented them as dictated by the gods themselves, and framed expressly for the benefit of mankind by their secretary Thoth, usually called Hermes. "An idea," says Diodorus, "adopted with success by many other lawgivers, who have thus insured respect for their institutions." By Thoth, the priests doubtless understood merely the agency of intellect in producing laws, but the people took it literally.

The Sacred Books of Hermes, containing the laws, science, and theology of Egypt, they declared to have been all composed during the reign of the gods, preceding that of their first king Menes. Allusions on very ancient monuments prove their great antiquity. There were four of them, and the subdivisions of the whole made forty-two volumes. These numbers correspond exactly to those of the Vedas, which the Pouranas of Hindostan inform us were carried into Egypt by the Yadavas. The subjects treated of were likewise extremely similar; but whether the Books of Hermes were copies of the Vedas, it is now impossible for the learning of man to discover. They were deposited in the inmost holy recesses of the temples, and none but the higher order of priests were allowed to read them. They were carried reverently in all great religious processions. The Chief Priests carried ten volumes relating to the emanations of the gods, the formation of the world, the divine annunciation of laws and rules



for the priesthood. The Prophets carried four, treating of astronomy and astrology. The leader of the sacred musical band carried two, containing hymns to the gods, and maxims to guide the conduct of the king; which the Chanter was required to know by heart. Such was the reputed antiquity and sanctity of these Egyptian hymns, that Plato says they were ascribed to Isis, and believed to be literally ten thousand years old. Servitors of the temple carried ten volumes more, containing forms of prayer, and rules for burnt-offerings, sheaf-offerings, fruit-offerings, festivals and processions. The other volumes treated of philosophy and sciences, including anatomy and medicine. These books were very famous in their day, and gave rise to theories of astrology and alchemy, by which people, even on the borders of our own time, have sought to foretell destiny from the aspect of the stars, and make gold by some mysterious chemical process. The Roman emperor Severus collected all writings on their Mysteries, and buried them in the tomb of Alexander the Great; and Diocletian destroyed all their books on alchemy, lest Egypt should become too rich to remain tributary to the Roman empire. The once world-renowned Books of Hermes have been lost these fifteen hundred years. Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea, who flourished about three hundred years after Christ, says these volumes contained the question, "Have you not been informed that all individual souls are emanations from the One Soul of the Universe?" Jamblichus, a celebrated Platonic philosopher of nearly the same period, gives the following extract from one of these books: "Before all things that essentially exist, and before the principles of all things, there existed One God, immoveable in the solitude of his unity. He is established self-begotten, the only Father, who is truly good. He is the fountain of all things, the root of all primary intelligible existing forms. Out of this One, the self-ruling God made himself shine forth; wherefore, he is the father of himself, and self-ruling; for he is the First Principle and God of gods. This Indivisible One is venerated in si-

lence." These extracts resemble portions of the Vedas, but it is doubtful whether they are authentic; for at that late period spurious books of Hermes were extant. That the doctrine of One Supreme Being was taught by the more enlightened of the ancient priests, together with other ideas far more elevated than the external worship indicated, seems not to admit of doubt. Plutarch, who wrote in the first century of our era, says: "The end of all the Egyptian rites and mysteries was the knowledge of that First God, who is the Lord of all things, to be discerned only by the mind. Their theology had two meanings; the one holy and symbolical, the other vulgar and literal; consequently, the figures of animals, which they had in their temples, and which they seemed to adore, were only so many hieroglyphics, to represent the divine attributes." Damascius, a Platonic philosopher of the fifth century, says: "The Egyptian philosophers of our time have declared as a hidden truth, found in their ancient writings, that there was One Principle of all things, praised under the name of the Unknown Darkness, and that thrice repeated." When the French army were in Egypt, they brought to light an important roll of papyrus written in hieroglyphics. It treated of the transmigration of souls, and ceremonies in honour of the dead. The soul on its long journey through the celestial gates, from sphere to sphere, is described as giving utterance to confessions, invocations, and prayers. The first fifteen chapters form a separate whole, with the general superscription, "Here begin the sections of the glorifications in the light of Osiris." This papyrus was found in the tombs of the kings of Thebes. It bears traces of having been compiled at different periods; but the learned Lepsius says the original plan unquestionably belongs to the remotest age. He dates the writing one thousand five or six hundred years before the Christian era, and says it is doubtless a fragment of the Sacred Books ascribed to Hermes.

The Pantheistic idea that a portion of God is in every

creature, and belief in the transmigration of human souls into animals, produced effects similar to those in Hindostan. Egyptian priests had a great horror of blood. They never shed it except in sacrifices to the gods, and that only upon very important occasions. Herodotus says: "The Egyptians put no cattle to death;" and he informs us that vessels were kept to convey away the bones of those that died, and bury them in an island appropriated to that purpose. Why some animals were worshipped, and others not, and why some of the favoured ones should have been the least sagacious or agreeable of beasts, was perhaps known to themselves and the Hindoos, but is likely to remain an unsolved riddle for us. In their complicated system of an eternal relation between all things in the universe, each deity had certain stars, plants and animals, mysteriously allied to him, and under his peculiar protection. Thus the Cow and the Lotus were sacred to Isis; the Bull and the fragrant blossom of the Golden Bean were sacred to Osiris. Each of the genii presiding over the signs of the zodiac had some plants or animals under his especial care. If we understood their system, we might perhaps discover why constellations are represented in the shape of animals, and why the Ram of Amun, the Bull of Osiris, and the Goat of Kham, mark successive signs in the zodiac. In some such way, animals were first introduced into the temple as emblems; and afterward when mystical worship degenerated into lifeless superstition, they adored the emblems as deities. Some of these animals were universally worshipped, others only in particular districts; and some were more sumptuously provided for than others. Public buildings and parks, warm baths, carpets, rich furniture, and beautiful female companions of their own species, were procured for them. They were perfumed with fragrant oils and fed on dainties. To kill or maltreat them was the greatest crime, and when they died, they were embalmed and magnificently buried. Men and women were set apart to take charge of them. The office was hereditary, and considered extremely honourable. When these func-

tionaries passed through villages, with the sacred banners of the animals they served, people bowed to the ground before them. When children recovered from sickness, parents shaved their hair, and gave the weight of it in gold or silver for the support of those animals. Even in time of famine, when driven to eat human flesh, the populace refrained from destroying any of these consecrated creatures. If they accidentally found one dead, they stood lamenting, and proclaiming with a loud voice that they found it so. When Cambyzes, the Persian, invaded Egypt, he took advantage of their customs, and protected his army by a vanguard of sacred animals.

Of all creatures the cow was held in the greatest veneration throughout Egypt. On great occasions, they sacrificed unblemished bulls or bullocks to the gods, but never heifers. Whoever killed one, even involuntarily, was punished with instant death.

A Bull called Apis, supposed by some to represent the celestial bull of the zodiac, was inaugurated with many ceremonies, and worshipped by the people as a God. Opposite the temple of Phtha, at Memphis, was a magnificent edifice where he was kept when publicly exhibited. The walls were richly sculptured, and the roof supported by colossal statues. He was generally seen only through the windows, but on some occasions he was led out into the vestibule, where his sacred mother was fed. He had extensive parks for exercise, and the most beautiful cows for companions. His food was carefully regulated, and he drank from a clear fountain, because the water of the Nile was deemed too fattening. He had access to two stables. If he entered one it was a good omen; if the other, it was an evil sign. If he ate readily, it was deemed fortunate for him who offered the food; but if he rejected it, they foreboded calamity. Those who wished to consult his oracle, deposited a coin on his altar, with certain ceremonies; and the first exclamation they heard afterward was deemed a voice from heaven for their guidance. They paid particular attention to the exclamations of little chil-



dren, especially if they were playing within the precincts of temples. It was supposed that children who smelled the breath of Apis received the gift of prophecy in a pre-eminent degree. At the annual rising of the Nile, a festival was held in commemoration of his birth. It continued seven days, and brought to Memphis a vast concourse of spectators. He was led through the city by priests in solemn procession, with troops of children singing hymns before him; and as he passed, all the people came out to welcome him. A golden shell was thrown into the Nile, and crocodiles were said to be tame while the feast lasted; probably because they received so much food. Notwithstanding this extreme veneration, Apis was not allowed to survive twenty-five years. If he lived till that age, the priests drowned him in a fountain, and all the people mourned till a new Apis was found. This limitation of his existence is supposed to have reference to some period in their astronomical calculations. He was embalmed, and great sums were lavished on his funeral. In 1816, Belzoni discovered, among tombs excavated in the mountains near Thebes, a huge sarcophagus of purest oriental alabaster, transparent and sonorous, covered with beautiful sculptured ornaments and hieroglyphic inscriptions, within and without. It contained the embalmed body of a bull.

When Apis was dead, the priests went in search of an animal to succeed him. The Sacred Books required that he should be black, with a white triangle on his forehead, a white crescent on his right side, and a bunch like a beetle under his tongue. When such a calf was found, it was said the cow conceived him by a ray from the sun. He was fed four months on milk, in a building facing the rising sun. At the end of the new moon, he was carried to Heliopolis in a richly gilded ship. There he was fed by women forty days. Thence he was conveyed with much pomp to his stately edifice at Memphis. The man from whose herd he was selected was deemed the most fortunate of mortals.

When Cambyeses conquered Egypt, having the Persian

horror of idols, he defaced the statues of the gods, and stabbed Apis with his sword. Ochus, one of his successors, served up Apis at a banquet, and put an Ass in the temple in his stead; for which outrage an Egyptian assassinated him and threw his body to the cats. Viewed calmly at this distance of time, the spirit manifested by one seems scarcely more commendable than that of the other.

A variety of animals were venerated only in particular districts. Thebans abstained from sheep, because the ram was an emblem of their god Amun. They never put one to death, except on the annual festival of that deity, when they sacrificed a ram with many ceremonies, and placed the skin upon his image. At Mendes, the presiding deity was Kham, God of Generation, who was represented with the head of a she-goat, and the legs of a male; therefore goats were sacred in that region. The god Anubis was represented with a dog's head. Wherever his worship prevailed, the dog was sacred, and they shaved their heads in token of mourning when one died. In some places, apes and monkeys were sacred, being connected with the history of the god Thoth. At Heliopolis, they detested the crocodile and assigned it to Typho, the Destroyer; but in the vicinity of Lake Moëris they worshipped the ugly creature. They kept a crocodile in a tank at the temple, and fed it with portions of the sacrifices. The priests, having rendered it perfectly tame by kind treatment, adorned it with bracelets of gold and necklaces of artificial gems. Worshippers brought offerings of bread and wine. In those districts they deemed it a mark of favour from the deity to be devoured by these monsters. A story is recorded of a woman who brought up a young crocodile, and her countrymen considered her the nurse of a divinity. Her little son played fearlessly with the beast, but when it grew large it devoured the boy. His mother exulted, considering his fate peculiarly blest in being thus incorporated with the household god. In some places small serpents were kept in the temples, fed on honey and flour. It was considered a mark of divine favour to be bitten by any

of this species. At Bubastis they worshipped a goddess represented with the head of a cat; and in that region cats were sacred. When one of them died, they shaved their eye-brows in sign of mourning. If a person killed one, even accidentally, a mob gathered round him and tore him to pieces without trial. When they went to foreign wars, they embalmed dogs and cats that died on the way, and brought them home for honourable burial. Belzoni found entire tombs filled with nothing but embalmed cats, carefully folded in red and white linen, the head covered by a mask representing its face.

Each district held to its own worship with the bigotry that everywhere characterizes disputes about religious faith. A civil war arose between two districts, because one ate the fish that the other worshipped. They did each other much mischief, and were severely punished by the Romans. The inhabitants of Ombos attacked those of Tentyris, because they had killed a crocodile; and the war was carried on with all the fury of sectarian zeal. Josephus declares that as early as the time when Abraham was in Egypt "they despised one another's sacred and accustomed rites, and were very angry one with another on that account." What theological tenets among the priests of different deities were at stake in these contentions cannot now be traced; but the great resemblance existing between their religion and that of Hindostan naturally leads to the conclusion that similar causes were at work to produce similar effects. Doubtless they had their formalists and spiritualists, their atheists and fanatics. It is recorded that the people of Thebais paid divine honours to nothing in mortal form, but adored only Cneph. Plutarch says the inhabitants of that region, on account of their more spiritual worship of One Invisible God, "without beginning or end," were excused from paying the public taxes levied on other Egyptians for maintenance of the sacred animals. It may readily be conjectured that such sects, like the Vedantins of Hindostan, regarded with pity those minds which had need of images and external symbols. But

elevated ideas of God and the soul were supposed to be above the comprehension of the populace, and incompatible with their employments. The priests, who were the only educated class, feared that if such knowledge were revealed to them, they would pervert it by all sorts of ignorant misconceptions. Therefore, they were left to obey laws without knowing why they were ordained, and to observe the ritual of religion without comprehending its import.

Egyptians were conservative in the extreme. They had the greatest possible objection to introducing foreign customs or opinions, or innovations of any kind. But they could not resist that law of our nature which has written decay, death, and resurrection, on all material things and all forms of opinion. The primitive faith of every people has always a tendency to degenerate into unmeaning forms; and the progress of corruption must be greatly accelerated where religious ideas, studiously hidden from the people, become a monopoly of power in the hands of a privileged class. In the beginning, the priestly style of living was very simple, but what we afterward hear of their grand establishments indicates a change. During the last days, when Egypt became a province of Rome, we have means of knowing that many abuses crept in. Old mystical ideas were almost buried under a mass of grotesque fancies. The influence of the priests declined. They still had charge of the national records, the education of youth, and the superintendence of weights and measures; but they no longer swayed the councils of government, or presided in courts of justice. Their servility to wealth and power is implied by the fact that when Alexander the Great consulted the oracle at Thebes, his ambitious wishes were gratified by hearing himself declared the son of Jupiter Ammon. In such a state of things, the character of the deities became degraded, and the animals regarded as deities were sometimes treated with contempt. If prayers and sacrifices proved unavailing to counteract drought, famine, or epidemics, people reproached the gods, and insulted their



images. Priests conducted the sacred animals to dark places, where they terrified them with threats, and sometimes even put them to death, if the evils continued. Still people clung to the outward ritual hallowed by so many ages of observance. The temples continued to swarm with animals, and images of animals, such as silver and brazen serpents, and gilded or golden calves. If a foreigner asked the meaning of their religious customs, the answer depended upon whether he addressed the initiated or the uninitiated; and in either case it was likely to be coloured by sectional prejudice. To one whose education did not enable him to sympathize with the blind reverence of the populace, and who had no means of knowing that more spiritual minds attached mystical significance to their strange symbols, the worship of Egypt must have seemed absurd in the extreme. No wonder it became a mark for the arrows of Grecian and Roman satire. It was common in Rome to call a foolish, pompous fellow "an Egyptian temple," which had such a magnificent exterior, and a monkey for the deity within. Thus every growth passes away, and dreary looks the stubble when the grain is gone.

But it is necessary to remember that their faith was once a solemn reality to millions of men, whose minds it swayed for ages. Powerful indeed must have been the feeling, which prompted men to expend so much wealth, labour, and ingenuity, in the service of their gods. The effect produced by their sublime temples on those sincerely under the influence of their national belief, may be partly conjectured from the wonder and reverence their ruins still inspire in men of other religions and a distant age. Those who see drawings, or fragmentary specimens in museums, can form no idea of the general effect of their architecture. Deities wearing the heads of rams, hawks, and cows, seem uncouth and ridiculous to us, who attach no meaning to the emblems. There is moreover a want of perspective in Egyptian art, a monotonous straightness in the position of the figures, and a barbarous taste in their unharmonized masses of colour. Such was their respect for prescribed

rules, that time and intercourse with other nations produced little change in these particulars. Plato, in his Republic, introduces the following remark in a dialogue: "The plan we have been laying down for youth was known long ago to the Egyptians; that nothing but beautiful forms and fine music should be permitted to enter into the assemblies of young people. Having settled what those forms and that music should be, they exhibited them in their temples; nor was it lawful, either in painting, statuary, or any branches of music, to make any alteration, or invent any forms different from what were established. Upon examination, therefore, you will find that the pictures and statues made ten thousand years ago, are in no one particular better or worse than what they now make."

But after all these deductions, the Egyptian ruins are not only sublime and impressive, but often extremely beautiful. Many of the sculptured animals are spirited, and all travellers agree that the countenances of gods and mortals are remarkable for simplicity, sweetness, and serenity of expression. Harriet Martineau says: "I was never tired of trying to imprint on my memory the characteristics of the old Egyptian face; the handsome arched nose, with its delicate nostril; the well-opened, though long eye; the placid, innocent mouth, and the smooth-rounded, amiable chin. Innocence is the prevailing expression, and sternness is absent. Thus the stiffest figures and the most monotonous gestures convey only an impression of dispassionateness and benevolence. The dignity of the gods and goddesses is beyond all description, from this union of fixidity and benevolence. If the traveller be blest with the clear eye and fresh mind, and be also enriched by comprehensive knowledge of the workings of the human intellect in its various circumstances, he cannot but be impressed, and he may be startled by the evidence before him of the elevation and beauty of the first conceptions formed by men of the Beings of the unseen world."

The architecture of Egypt greatly resembles that of Hindostan. There are the same gigantic proportions, the

same flat roofs of ponderous stone, supported by the same massive columns; the same herculean labour in the excavation of tombs and temples through the solid rock of everlasting hills, the same gloomy cavernous effect of the interior, the same colossal images, the same infinity of sculptured figures everywhere, painted in the same bright colours.

The ruins of Egyptian Thebes are well known as the most wonderful in the world. Its date ascends beyond the records of history. Homer celebrates it as "the city with a hundred gates;" and he wrote nearly a thousand years before Christ. Existing monuments prove that it must have been in full glory more than three thousand years ago. Belzoni says: "The most sublime ideas that can be formed from the most magnificent specimens of our present architecture would give a very incorrect picture of these ruins. It appeared to me like entering a city of giants, who, after a long conflict, were all destroyed, leaving the ruins of their various temples as the only proofs of their former existence." The most celebrated of these structures is now universally known under the name of El Karnac. It faces the Nile, with which it is connected by an avenue a mile long, with gigantic sphinxes on each side all the way. Diodorus describes the walls as twenty-four feet thick, and a mile and a half in circumference. They have twelve principal entrances, each composed of several towers and colossal gateways, beside other buildings attached to them, in themselves larger than most other temples. On each side of many of the towers are colossal statues, from twenty to thirty feet high. The large building, supposed to have been the royal palace, was built more than three thousand years ago, by Ramses the Great, commonly called Sesostris. It is entered through an open colonnade, and up an ascent of twenty-seven steps. These lead into a covered hall, so spacious that a large European church might stand within it. The ceiling, of unhewn blocks of stone, is sustained by one hundred and thirty-four columns, sixty-five feet high, and

thirty in circumference. The whole hall, from top to bottom, is covered with sculptures relating to religious worship. In several places an Ark is represented, as carried on poles, resting on the shoulders of priests, and followed by a procession of people. There are likewise branched candlesticks, tables with loaves of bread, and cherubim with extended wings. The number of these sculptures is so great that no one has been able to count them, much less to copy them. Another colonnade beyond leads to a succession of apartments covered with sculpture representing domestic scenes, mixed with religious ceremonies. All these are painted in vivid colours, which still retain their brilliancy. The ceiling of the central room is painted blue, studded with constellations of stars. Denon says: "One is fatigued with writing, one is fatigued with reading, one is stunned with the thought of such a conception. It is hardly possible to believe in so much magnificence even after having seen it." The ancient existence of libraries is proved by these ruins. Champollion found on a doorway representations of Thoth and a feminine deity, who presided over arts, science, and literature. Above their heads were, "Lord of the Library," and "Lady of Letters," carved in hieroglyphics. Fragments from the History of the Greek Hecataeus inform us that he saw this grand edifice more than five hundred years before Christ. He says it then contained a library of Sacred Books, over the entrance of which was inscribed, "The Remedy for the Soul." Near the palace is the great Temple of Karnac, one of the sublimest specimens of Egyptian architecture. It has a lofty magnificent gateway, more than sixty-two feet high, of richly sculptured sandstone. This leads to a gallery of colossal rams, which indicate that the precincts were sacred to Amun, commonly called Jupiter Ammon. The grandeur of the interior corresponds to the external decorations. Heeren says: "This temple is without doubt one of the most ancient that now exist in Egypt, yet both this and the palace are built of materials taken from edifices more



ancient still." Every year the statue of Amun was carried in solemn procession into Libya, over a space of nine or ten miles. Almost the entire road was lined with temples, colossal statues, and long avenues of gigantic sphinxes. Richardson says: "It is impossible to conceive anything more impressive than the view which must have burst upon the sight of the enraptured votaries, when, at the close of the solemnity of bringing back their god, they entered the grand Temple of Karnac to replace him in his shrine, with harps and cymbals, and songs of rejoicing."

About two miles from El Karnac is the great Temple of Luxor, supposed to have been built two centuries earlier. Here likewise deities are represented surmounted by the inscriptions, "Lord of the Divine Writings," and "Lady of Letters." Belzoni, describing this place, says: "The avenue of sphinxes leading to the great temple inspires the visitor with devotion, and their enormous size strikes him with wonder. Each side of the gate leading to the inner courts are seated immense colossal figures, as if guarding the entrance of the holy ground. Farther on is the magnificent temple dedicated to the Great God of Creation. I entered it alone. The sun was rising, and long shadows from groups of columns extended over the ruins, while rays of light struck on the masses in various directions, forming views that baffle all description. How can I describe my sensations! I seemed alone in the midst of all that is most sacred in the world. A forest of enormous columns adorned all round, from top to bottom, with beautiful figures, and various ornaments; the graceful shape of the Lotus, which forms their capitals; the gates, walls, pedestals, everywhere adorned with symbolical figures, representing battles, processions, feasts, offerings, and sacrifices, all relating no doubt to the ancient history of the country; the sanctuary formed of fine red granite, with various obelisks standing before it, proclaiming to the distant passenger, 'Here is the seat of holiness;' the high portals seen from afar through the openings to this vast

labyrinth of edifices; the various groups of ruins of other temples within sight; all these had such an effect upon my soul, as to separate me in imagination from the rest of mortals, exalt me on high over all, and cause me to forget the trifles and follies of life. My mind was impressed with such solemnity that for some time I was unconscious whether I was on terrestrial ground, or on some other planet."

In the vicinity of Thebes are wonderful excavations in the granite of mountains, similar to those described at Ellora and Elephanta, in Hindostan. Some are very extensive, with winding stairs leading to small apartments in all directions. Some have deep shafts or wells, and at the bottom of the wells passages to smaller apartments, with endless winding recesses. In these cavernous depths are a multitude of colossal statues of all the gods. The various halls and chambers are covered with hieroglyphic writing and painted sculptures, the colours of which are still fresh and glowing. Here Belzoni discovered the alabaster sarcophagus. Speaking of the apartment where it was found, Harriet Martineau says: "We enjoyed seeing the whole lighted up by a fire of straw. I shall never forget that gorgeous chamber in this palace of death. The rich colours on the walls were brought out by the flame; and the wonderful ceiling, all starred with emblems, and peopled with countless yellow figures, was like nothing earthly." One priestly tomb in these excavations occupies an acre and a quarter of the heart of the rock. Here is the sepulchre of the Pharaoh who pursued the Hebrews into the Red Sea. "Five lines of tribute-bearers show how extensive was his dominion. They are of various costumes and complexions, bringing ivory, apes, leopards, gold, and among other offerings a bear;" as if the extreme North also acknowledged his power. The faces of the Pharaohs on these monuments are likenesses. This carries back the art of portrait-sculpture into high antiquity.

Memphis, much farther down the Nile, was founded by the first king Menes, who, all agree, must have lived between

four and five thousand years ago; and some place him much earlier. Here was a magnificent temple to Phtha, which it took several generations of kings to complete. Many titles of this once famous city are found among the hieroglyphics; such as, "The Abode of Good," "Land of the Pyramid," "The Habitation of Pthah." Here Abraham was a guest, and Sarai, his beautiful wife, was lodged in the palace of the king. Here Joseph rode through the streets in the royal chariot, clothed "with fine linen, and a chain of gold about his neck." The fine linen and the wrought gold show that even then Memphis was old in civilization. Here Moses was educated in the household of Pharaoh, and became "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." There are now scarcely any remains of this mighty city; but Abdallatif, a traveller from Bagdad, thus describes it, as he saw it about seven hundred years ago: "The ruins occupy a space which is half a day's journey every way. As for the idols that are found among them, whether one considers their number, or their prodigious magnitude, it is a thing beyond all description, and of which no idea can be conveyed. But there is a thing yet more worthy of admiration; and that is the precision of their forms, the justness of their proportions, and their resemblance to nature." Speaking of the famous pyramids near the city, he says: "The stones are covered with writing, the import of which is at this day unknown. More than ten thousand pages of paper would be filled, if only the inscriptions seen on these two pyramids were copied."

It is now known that these huge monuments have stood more than four thousand years. It is proved to a certainty, from the hieroglyphics, that they were built, at the *least* calculation, three hundred years before Abraham was born, and seven or eight hundred years before the time of Moses. In 1837 the name of the king who built the Great Pyramid was found written on the rough stones. He lived near the time of Menes, and is the Cheops to whom Herodotus attributes the construction of this vast pile. In his time, the

outside was covered with writing, which Abdallatif says he saw as late as the twelfth century after our era. Unfortunately, before the attention of European scholars was drawn toward Memphis, the marble casing of the pyramids was destroyed, and the writing lost. But we cannot lose possession of the fact that in those very remote times Egyptians must have had wonderful machinery, graving tools, an alphabet, and a knowledge of writing. Among the multitude of tombs in this vicinity are some coeval with the pyramids. A hieroglyphic record in one of them declares that it was built for "Eimeï, great priest of the habitation of king Shoop-hoo" (called Cheops by the Greeks). Inkstands and reed-pens are common among the emblems here. A papyrus is now in Europe, of the date of Shoop-hoo; which proves alphabetic signs, and written documents, and that kind of paper to have been in use when the Great Pyramid was built; nearly a thousand years before Moses was born.

Herodotus declares the pyramids were built for sepulchres; and the learned now agree in opinion that for a long series of years every Egyptian monarch caused one of these royal tombs to be built for himself. The sarcophagi found in them proves that they were used for burial-places; but the immense size of some of them, the various chambers, the shafts or wells, and the deep subterranean passages, have led to various conjectures concerning the possibility of their being likewise used for other purposes. Some have supposed that great religious Mysteries were celebrated there. Mr. Wilford, during his residence in Hindostan, described the Great Pyramid to several learned Bramins. He says: "They at once declared it to have been a temple. One of them asked if it had not a communication under ground with the river Nile. When I mentioned that such a passage was said to have existed, and that a well was at this day to be seen, they unanimously agreed that it was a place appropriated to the worship of Padma Devi, and that on certain festivals her priests used to fill the trough with sacred water and lotus-blossoms."



It has already been stated that it was a custom in Egypt for families, accompanied by priests, to visit the tombs of relatives at stated seasons, and offer oblations and prayers for the departed. Perhaps something of this kind might have been done on a scale of exceeding grandeur in the pyramids, for the royal ones whose bodies rested there.

On the island of Elephantina, in the Nile, there is a great accumulation of columns, obelisks, portals, and two small temples, covered within and without with hieroglyphics, executed in a style of great excellence. Denon supposes these to belong to the earliest ages of Egypt of which any trace remains. At Edfu, on the Nile, are also remarkable structures of great antiquity ; but the temples in these and in other places are now discovered to be partly built of the ruins of other temples more ancient still.

At Dendera are the remains of large temples, comparatively modern. They were first discovered by Bonaparte's army, and are supposed to have been erected nearly two thousand years ago. They are distinguished for lavishness of ornament, extraordinary beauty of execution, and brilliancy of colouring. French writers say: "All that you see here, from the colossal statues of Isis to the smallest hieroglyphic, appears to have come from fairy-land." The soldiers declared with one voice that this sight alone was enough to indemnify them for all the fatigues of their campaign. On the ceiling of the principal temple was painted a zodiac, which attracted great attention among the astronomers of Europe. This and other Egyptian zodiacs gave rise to much controversy concerning the astronomical proof of antiquity they conveyed. In 1822 the police of Paris suppressed some Essays, which started theories at variance with the chronology of the Hebrew Scriptures. It is now generally decided by the learned that none of these zodiacs are much older than the Christian era.

Captain Burr, of the British army, who went to Egypt with East India troops, was struck with the resemblance in costume and the manners represented, between the sculptures at Dendera and those he had seen in Hindostan. He

came to the conclusion that "a closer connection must have formerly existed among the nations of the East, when they were yet united by the same worship." The Hindoo soldiers who accompanied him were filled with awe and amazement. They believed themselves to be in the presence of their own ancient deities, and were indignant at the neglect into which their worship had fallen. They exclaimed: "Surely Hindoos must have lived in this country!" Some thought the wonderful edifice might have been built by Rakshasas, or Evil Spirits; that being the usual account given of Buddhist temples by the Brahmins.

The ancient Egyptian temples were always of solid massive stone, without cement, and enclosed by thick walls. In time of war they were used as fortifications, and places of refuge for the inhabitants. Vestiges of tanks, or ponds, for ablution, are generally found near them, and many of them have deep sockets, apparently used for flags on festival occasions. The entrance was a porch in form of a truncated pyramid, very grand and massive. Through this they passed into an open court surrounded with columns, with partition walls about half of their height. This outer court was probably intended for the people, where they might see the ceremonies and processions from a certain distance. Next to this came a portico, supported by rows of immense pillars. Through this they passed into vast saloons, three or four in succession, supposed to be intended for the religious processions and ceremonies which are pictured on the walls. At the extremity was a niche of granite or porphyry. This was the sanctuary, approached by none but the priests. Sometimes it contained the statue of the deity to whom the temple was dedicated; sometimes an image of the Bull, Apis, or some other sacred animal; sometimes the Oracle Ship of Amun, in its shrine. In the great temples this Sacred Ship was often very magnificent. Sesostris presented one to the temple of Amun at Thebes, made of cedar, the inside lined with silver, and the outside covered with gold.

Sometimes the sanctuary contained a shrine or Ark, surmounted by a small image overshadowed with wings, sometimes the wings of Isis, sometimes of the Goddess of Truth, sometimes of the sacred bird Ibis. On each side of the saloons were corridors, which led into apartments where the priests lived. The walls, columns, and ceilings, were covered with sculpture. The capitals of the pillars were generally composed of native plants; Lotus leaves, and Palm branches, arranged in endless variety. The figures on the walls were usually in bold relief, representing deities and their worshippers engaged in some religious ceremony. Near them were long explanatory inscriptions in hieroglyphics. All these sculptures were painted yellow, red, blue, green, and white. The colour of each deity, and of every other object, was established by rules, which admitted of no deviation. Denon says: "An Egyptian temple is, as it were, an open book, where science unfolds, where morality teaches, where the useful arts are set forth. Everything seems to speak; all seems animated, and all in the same spirit. The doorposts, the most secret corners, give a lesson, or a rule; and the whole is in most wonderful harmony."

The Oracle Ship in its shrine, or the Ark overshadowed with wings, occur very frequently in all the sculptured representations of religious ceremonies. Sometimes the king is kneeling before it at his devotions; sometimes he is coming toward it with an offering of frankincense. More frequently the priests carry it resting on long poles, supported by their shoulders. They are followed by bands of men and women, dancing, singing, playing on musical instruments, and clapping their hands in cadence, as they approach the temple. Everywhere are emblems to remind the traveller of similar buildings on the banks of the Ganges. The beautiful water-lily called Lotus is represented in every stage of growth. Deities are seated on a Lotus, crowned with Lotus, and carry a Lotus stem for a sceptre. In both countries it was an emblem of the generative power, and of the creation of the world from water.

Serpents are winding about the ceilings, or interwoven in rings, to represent vast astronomical cycles. There are serpents with the heads of deities, and serpents with the legs of human beings; serpents winged, and serpents crowned. In both countries, this creature was the symbol of wisdom and immortality. Three was a mystical and significant number, and the Triangle is found in all their sacred places. Perhaps its three sides were a type of their Divine Triad, or Trinity, consisting of the masculine principle of the universe, the feminine principle, and the offspring, or result, of the two. The Emblem of Life, so often found on Egyptian monuments, is explained by Sir J. G. Wilkinson as the union of the perpendicular line and the horizontal line, already mentioned as in use among Hindoos; one being a representative of the masculine emblem of generation, the other of the feminine; both together signifying the reproduction of life, or birth. It is surmounted by a ring, which is sometimes formed of eggs. This cross of Hermes, as it is called, is in various ways connected with the hieroglyphics of the planets, and is everywhere placed in the hands of deities, especially of Osiris. The sculptures often represent them offering it, with a cornucopia of fruit and grain, to kings at their inauguration; perhaps to signify the bestowal of abundant harvests, numerous flocks, and many children. It was generally worn by the devout, and was considered an amulet of great virtue, a protection from Evil Spirits. When this Cross was twined with a Serpent, it was the emblem of Immortal Life. The Mundane Egg occurs often among the sculptures; and so does an Eye to represent the all-seeing Osiris, and the Sun. There are apes and dwarfs looking pigmy and strange in the presence of colossal companions. The mysterious emblem called the Sphinx was much more frequently introduced in Egypt than in India. It is supposed to have been a royal emblem, manifesting their ideas of what a king ought to be. It had a lion's body with a man's head, or a ram's head; perhaps to signify the union of physical strength with



intellect in one case, and with innocence in the other.

In these antique records of deceased generations, the greatest discords occur, as they do everywhere else in the manifestations of our unharmonized nature. There are deities serenely majestic, and in their sublime presence priests are kneeling before a monkey or a beetle. In one place are pleasing pictures of domestic life, men, women, and children with countenances innocent and mild; in another are heaps of human hands and ears cut from enemies in battle. Sometimes a man is represented kneeling, with his hands bound, while a priest points a knife to his throat. Sometimes there are men with knives thrust through their foreheads, or with heads flying from their shoulders. These may signify the execution of criminals, or the immolation of human victims. Such sacrifices were offered in ancient times. The priest examined the victim and put his seal upon him, as he did to animals intended for the altar. It is said the custom was abolished in Upper Egypt before the time of Moses; but it remained in other parts of the empire till the time of Amasis, who reigned five or six hundred years before the Christian era. He ordained that wax images should be substituted for human beings.

Long pilgrimages to holy places were considered efficacious for the expiation of sin; but there are no records of such self-tortures as are practised by Hindoo devotees. Philostratus, a Greek writer, about two hundred years after Christ, describes an association of men who lived in a grove not far from the Nile. He calls them *Gymnosophists*, which means naked philosophers. Perhaps they discarded clothing in sign of superior sanctity and indifference to the world. He says they worshipped the god of the Nile, and believed in the immortality of the soul. Each one lived by himself, and studied and sacrificed apart; but they sometimes met together in assemblies. If a man at Memphis had by any chance killed another, he was exiled till these *Gymnosophists* had absolved him by ceremonies of purification.

The laws of caste appear to have been less rigid in

Egypt than in Hindostan. Solomon, though a foreigner, married a daughter of one of their kings; a degree of toleration which perhaps originated in the fact that Egyptians and Jews were both circumcised nations. The condition of women in Egypt was prodigiously in advance of their enslaved sisters in Hindostan. It was customary to marry but one wife. Trade was carried on by women. The sculptures represent them buying and selling in the markets, and meeting with men at feasts, apparently on terms of equality. When kings died without sons, daughters succeeded to the throne; and in some of the sculptured processions, queens take precedence of kings.

When Alexander the Great conquered Egypt, three hundred and thirty-two years before Christ, he founded a new city, and gave it his own name, Alexandria. Among its many splendid edifices for worship, the most magnificent was dedicated to Serapis, tutelary deity of the city. Sesostris, after his return from extensive conquests, is said to have introduced into Egypt the worship of this new god. It has been conjectured that he was the emblem of Pantheism, combining in himself the attributes of all the gods, and therefore considered by Sesostris a desirable point of unity for many nations, with distinct religions, all under the control of his government. For the same reason he was a peculiarly appropriate deity to preside over the great commercial city of Alexandria, where worshippers of various gods were wont to congregate. That he represented all things seems to be implied by the fact that his image was made of all metals fused together, and inlaid with all sorts of precious stones. A great variety of emblems were connected with the figure. A huge serpent entwined the whole, and rested his head in the hand of the god. When Nicocreon, king of Cyprus, inquired who Serapis was, the god replied, through the voice of his oracle: "My head is heaven, my ears the air, my eyes the sunlight, my belly the sea, and my feet the earth." Severe penalties were incurred by any one who ventured to say Serapis had ever been incarnated in a human form. This

law of the priests might have originated in the idea that it was blasphemy to suppose any one being could combine in himself all the attributes of the Universal Soul. The Temple of Serapis is described as one of the stateliest the world has ever seen. A great mass of buildings were included within its enclosures, and there were vast subterranean passages underneath, where it is supposed some of the great religious Mysteries were celebrated. In the centre of the enclosure stood the Temple, on an artificial elevation, surrounded with a magnificent portico. The lofty ceiling was supported by immense marble pillars, of beautiful proportions. The statue of the god was of such colossal size that the right hand touched the wall of the sanctuary on one side, and the left on the other. An aperture in the wall was so arranged that the first gleams of the rising sun fell directly on the face; and worshippers thought he smiled to meet the god of that luminary. A small image of the Sun, seated in a chariot, with four horses, was suspended from the ceiling, and at the close of day was drawn up by a powerful magnet, to represent his farewell. The temple was surrounded by a great number of galleries and apartments devoted to the priests, and to devotees, who had taken vows of celibacy. This splendid structure was totally destroyed in the fourth century of our era.

Alexander the Great was imbued with the Grecian freedom of thought, and facility of adaptation to new things. He was moreover desirous of attracting the enterprise, wealth and learning of the world to his new city. He commanded that the laws and religion of Egypt should be respected, but he encouraged Greeks and Jews to settle there, and extended the same toleration to their opinions. The site of the city was consecrated by solemn sacrifices both to the deities of Egypt and of Greece. As the great commercial route from India to various portions of the Roman empire lay through Alexandria, it became the great focus of trade; a connecting link between the unchanging East and the ever-changing West. It grew so

rapidly, that in a short time Rome was the only city that surpassed it in wealth and grandeur. In the century following Alexander, those two liberal kings of Egypt, Ptolemy Soter and Ptolemy Philadelphus, founded and enlarged an academy and museum, with a royal library of seven hundred thousand volumes. It was the first establishment of the kind ever known in the world. Scholars of all nations and creeds flocked thither to enjoy its advantages. A general indulgence was granted to this promiscuous crowd to teach their respective doctrines to whoever was inclined to listen. Disciples of diverse systems met together in the library, and at meals, and had ample opportunities to compare theories of religion and philosophy. Under these influences was formed a new set of teachers, who carried to distant countries the ideas they had received, and thus shook up and mixed together the forms of human thought everywhere.

Old Egypt, once called the "image of heaven, and the temple of the whole world," dwindled away. All the nations had borrowed of her religion and science, but she was too conservative to borrow of them. Successively conquered by Persia, Greece, and Rome, and largely settled by Jews, she gradually lost her strength. Her princes were Grecians, her children attended Greek schools. Her religion became a lifeless body, her language utterly extinct, her sacred writing an unknown cipher, and half her monuments buried in the drifting sand. But traces of her customs still exist on the shores of the Nile. Modern jugglers know the trick by which her old magicians rendered serpents motionless or stiff. They compress the cervical spine of the animal between the finger and thumb and call it changing the serpent into a rod, or stick. When thrown down, the pressure being removed, it becomes a serpent again. Idiots are considered holy, and their exclamations prophetic. In this form lingers the ancient reverence for unpremeditated speech. The different sections of Cairo are now under the guardianship of genii, as they were formerly each under the protection of



some tutelary deity. An image of a ram's head is still worn as an amulet against evil, and so is the golden beetle, once sacred to the sun, and an emblem of creation. The star of Isis looks down brightly as ever on the land that was once her own. The Sphinx stands dark and solemn in the desert twilight, a huge phantom of the mighty past, unable to reveal her mystery.

“There sits drear Egypt, 'mid beleaguering sands,  
Half human and half beast;  
The burnt-out torch within her mouldering hands,  
That once lit all the East.”

## CHINA AND THIBET.

"I compile and transmit to posterity, but write not anything new. I believe and love the ancients, taking Laou Pang for my pattern."

CONFUCIUS.

THE Chinese claim for themselves almost unlimited antiquity. Their traditions go back millions of years, to a time when they were governed by the gods; but their early history is enveloped in thick darkness. It is the universal belief in Benares that they emigrated from Hindostan, and this opinion is said to be sustained by a passage in the Code of Menu. Their historical books, translated by Frenchmen of science, exhibit a regular chronology, extending back three thousand years before our era. Considerable knowledge of astronomy existed among them at a very early period. One of the Jesuit missionaries in China, who had read more than a hundred volumes of their annals, assures us that they observed the motions of the heavenly bodies soon after our date of the Deluge; and European scholars have satisfied themselves that they accurately calculated an eclipse two thousand one hundred and fifty-five years before Christ. They named successive days for the same seven planets that Hindoos and Egyptians did. Their learned men have always occupied themselves with history, political maxims and external sciences, without manifesting much interest in metaphysical inquiries or mystical theories. They have changed less in the course of ages than any other nation on earth, partly owing to the peculiarity of their language, which impedes the introduction of foreign literature, and partly owing to their extreme veneration for everything ancient. Opinions must be sustained by precedent and authority, and once

received they are cast into an exact mould, the pattern of which must never change. Their minds are never troubled with the query, which, in one form or another, has disturbed the repose of the priesthood all the world over; no restless activity of intellect induces them to inquire: "Why must I always wear my grandfather's hat? My head was not measured for it." Unquestioning obedience to superiors, in church, state, and household, constitutes their morality. Their emperor is called Holy Son of Heaven, and Sole Guardian of the Earth." His subjects prostrate themselves in his presence, and do homage to his image and his throne. He is, and always has been, at the head of ecclesiastical affairs. A belief in the divine origin of kings, so universal among the ancients, is expressed by the Chinese in a tradition concerning their first monarch, Fo-hi. They say he had no mortal father; that his mother conceived him encompassed by a rainbow. Men remarkable for holiness or wisdom are generally called Tien-tse, Sons of Heaven. It is a common opinion that they had no mortal fathers, but derived their existence from some heavenly source.

The greatest name among Chinese sages is Kong-Fou-tseu, Latinized into Confucius. He was born five hundred and fifty-one years before Christ. In boyhood he was remarkably serious, and manifested no taste for childish amusements. His ancestors held offices under government for six generations, but in youth he was poor, and obliged to support himself by manual labour. He had but one wife, to whom he was married at nineteen years of age. When twenty years old, he was appointed superintendent of grain and cattle in his native province, as a reward for intelligence and virtuous conduct. Afterward he held the rank of Mandarin at court, but as the king would not follow his advice in what he deemed for the good of the people, he resigned his office, went into a neighbouring province, and became a teacher of morals. He is said to have had several thousand disciples, by whom he appears to have been regarded with the deepest veneration. They

said: "Since men existed, there has never been one to be compared to Confucius." "As the heavens cannot be scaled, even by the highest ladder, so no man can attain to Confucius. Were he to obtain the throne, he would establish the people, and they would be correct." "He may be compared to heaven and earth, in their supporting, containing, and overshadowing all things; to the regular revolutions of the seasons, and the alternate shining of the sun and moon." But it is not likely that such transcendent merit would have been accorded to him in any other country.

The formality of Chinese etiquette is stamped on all that is related of him. His moral teachings are mixed with many rules how to regulate the countenance, and how to stand or walk in the presence of elders, or superiors in rank. It is recorded, as very important, that on the first of every month he always put on his court robes, and waited on the prince. "When he entered the palace door he crouched down, as if the door could not admit him. Holding up his robes, he ascended the hall, bending his body, repressing his breath, as if he did not dare to breathe. When he passed by the empty throne, his countenance changed suddenly, and he walked with grave and measured steps, as if fettered. When he went out, and descended one step, he relaxed his countenance a little, and assumed a mild and pleasing deportment. When he reached the foot of the stairs, he let fall his robes, and expanded his arms like a bird's wings." "When he met any person in mourning, he bowed even to the front cross-beam of his carriage; he did the same to a person bearing the census of the people. If the mat was not laid straight, he sat not down. When old men, who walked with canes, withdrew from a feast, he rose and retired also." He never drank wine enough to confuse his mind; and whatsoever he ate or drank, he first offered a portion to the gods. It is recorded that he turned back from a journey, on account of meeting unlucky omens by the way. He was fond of music, and often recommended its cultivation; particularly



that of their famous monarch, Shun, which so excited him, when he first heard it, that he knew not the taste of his food for three months after. His doctrines are based on the idea that human nature is good and beautiful, unless obscured by the darkness of ignorance, or sullied by the contagion of vice. As the best means of restoring its original lustre, he inculcates reverence toward the Supreme Ruler, justice and kindness toward others, temperate indulgence of the appetites, and a due regard to the medium of propriety in all things. His respect for parental authority was carried to such an extreme, that he thought parents had a right to sell their children. He encouraged marriage and agriculture, but was less favourable to commerce. On religious subjects his recorded sayings are very indefinite. He appears to have conformed to the usages of his country as he found them. He alludes reverently to a Supreme Ruler, and it may be inferred that he had belief of some kind in the immortality of the soul. He inculcates the worship of Spirits, and ceremonial observances to the souls of ancestors.

He wrote no books, and his literary merit, as he himself says, is merely that of a compiler. Being desirous to hand down to posterity the worship and the principles of political wisdom, practised by their pattern-princes, Yaou and Shun, who lived fifteen hundred years before him, he collected and arranged the scattered fragments of old books relating to the laws and manners of ancient times. Therefore, the Chinese consider him superior even to those revered monarchs; for "they benefitted one age only by their wise and benevolent government; while Confucius, by transmitting their principles to ten thousand ages, possesses ten thousand times their merit."

The Chinese sage lived seventy-three years, and toward the close of his life mourned much over modern degeneracy. A few days before his death, he said to his disciples: "Kings refuse to follow my maxims, and since I am no longer useful in the world, it is best I should depart from it." Many of his disciples erected a tent near his grave,

and remained there three years, mourning for him, and offering prayers and sacrifices; one of them lingered six years. His descendants inherit the office and title of Mandarins, and, to this day, religious honours are paid to his memory, as if he were an illustrious ancestor lately deceased. The following are samples of his maxims, as recorded by his disciples:—

“Not to correct our faults is to commit new ones.”

“Be rigid to yourself and gentle to others, and you will have no enemies.”

“The wise man loves to be by himself, the fool seeks company.”

“By the very errors of men, we may judge whether they are virtuous or not. If a good man errs, it is generally through excess of affection or gratitude; but the errors of a vicious man commonly proceed from excess of hatred and ingratitude.”

“Life and death depend on the law of Tien, which is immutable. Poverty and riches are dispensed by Tien, who cannot be compelled. A wise man reveres the dispensations of Tien, and thus enjoys inward tranquillity and peace.”

“How vast is the power of Spirits! An ocean of invisible Intelligences surround us everywhere. If you look for them, you cannot see them. If you listen, you cannot hear them. Identified with the substance of all things, they cannot be separated from it. They cause men to purify and sanctify their hearts; to clothe themselves with festive garments, and offer oblations to their ancestors. They are everywhere above us, on the right and on the left. Their coming cannot be calculated. How important that we should not neglect them!”

“Worship the gods, as though they were visibly present. Sacrifice to ancestors as if they were here.”

“He who knows right principles is not equal to him who loves them; nor is he who loves them equal to him who delights in them.”

“Coarse rice for food, water for drink, and one’s bended

arm for a pillow, even in the midst of these there is happiness; but riches and honours gained by injustice are to me like fleeting clouds."

"To know that a thing is right and not to do it, is weakness."

"Have not a friend morally inferior to yourself."

"If you err, fear not to reform."

"Be not sorry that men do not know you, but be sorry that you are ignorant of men."

"The highest exercise of benevolence is tender affection for relatives."

"Teach all, without regard to what class they belong."

"To be thoroughly instructed in music and rites, to teach others principles of virtue, to possess the friendship of many wise men, these are useful satisfactions. But satisfactions derived from pride, vanity, idleness, and sensual pleasures, are injurious."

"How wise is Hwuy! He has only a bamboo vase for his rice, a cup to drink from, and a mean narrow lane for his habitation. Other men could not endure such privations; but it disturbs not the serenity of Hwuy!"

"Fix the thoughts on duty, practise without ceasing the virtue of humanity, and, if you have leisure, cultivate the arts."

"To keep invariably in the due medium constitutes virtue; men rarely persevere in it."

"The nature of man is upright. If in the course of his life he loses this natural uprightness, he removes far from him all happiness."

"If wise and virtuous men were to govern a state for a hundred years, they could put an end to tyranny and punishments."

"Abroad, do your duty to your prince and his magistrates. At home, obey your father, mother, and elder brothers. In funeral and sacrificial rites, do not permit any negligence. Allow yourself no excess in the use of wine."

"I see no defect in the character of Yu. He was sober

in eating and drinking, and eminently pious toward Spirits and ancestors. His common apparel was coarse, but his sacrificial robes were beautifully adorned. He lived in an humble dwelling, but employed his strength in making ditches and water-courses for the good of the people."

There was an old tradition that the Yu here referred to by Confucius was born of a virgin, who conceived him from the rays of a star. He is said to have been employed by the emperor to drain off the waters of a great deluge, which, according to Chinese chronology, occurred two thousand two hundred years before Christ.

When Confucius was asked what might be said in favour of rewarding hatred by kindness, he replied: "In that case, with what will you reward kindness? Return bad treatment with equity, and recompense kindness with kindness." One of his disciples begged that he would teach him to die well. He answered: "You have not yet learned to live well; when you have learned that, you will know how to die well." Some person inquired of him what one maxim expressed the conduct proper for a whole life. He rejoined: "Never do to others what you do not wish them to do to you." One day, when he had gone out from among his scholars, a question arose concerning the general purport of his teaching. One of them said: "The doctrine of our master consists solely in integrity of heart, and treating his neighbour as he himself wishes to be treated." There is a tradition that Confucius was often heard to repeat: "In the Land of the West will the holy one be found." This declaration coincides with a prophecy in their old Sacred Books, and was afterward brought into general notice when the religion of Fo was introduced from India, which they are accustomed to designate as the Land of the West.

The compilation of ancient history and laws made by Confucius is called, by way of pre-eminence, "The Five Volumes." They date four hundred years before Moses, about two thousand years before the Christian era, and refer continually to a religion long established at the time



they were written, which they merely seek to preserve and impress upon the minds of the people. They are universally considered to be very sacred authority, though they do not claim to be divine revelations, and a comparatively small portion of their contents are of a strictly religious character. They contain the fundamental laws of the empire, rules for rites and ceremonies, moral maxims, and memoirs of princes. Apparently, their chief object was to preserve tranquillity in the state, by a precise regulation of manners and the inculcation of perfect obedience to government. They preserve a tradition concerning a mysterious Garden, where grew a Tree, bearing Apples of Immortality, guarded by a winged Serpent, called a Dragon. They describe a primitive age of the world, when the earth yielded abundance of delicious fruits without cultivation, and the seasons were untroubled by wind or storms. There was no calamity, sickness or death. Men were then good without effort; for the human heart was in harmony with the peacefulness and beauty of nature. After this happy time, men degenerated by progressive stages. But finally Tien-tse, a Son of Heaven, would be born into the world, do away all sin, and restore order. These ancient books contain no specific doctrine concerning God, but they make frequent mention of One Invisible Being, under the name of Chang-ti, which signifies the Supreme Emperor. Sometimes he is called Tien, meaning the visible heaven. Their interpreters explain this by saying: "The firmament is the most glorious work produced by the Great First Cause." Chang-ti is described as the Original Principle of all things, almighty, omniscient, knowing the inmost secrets of the heart, watching over the conduct of the universe, and permitting nothing to happen contrary to his will; rewarding virtue and punishing wickedness, raising up and casting down kings, and sending public calamities as a warning to nations to repent and forsake their sins. When an unjust emperor was struck by lightning, these Sacred Volumes represent it as a direct and visible punishment, sent by Tien, or Heaven,

as an admonition to mankind. They contain many solemn invocations to Chang-ti, for the recovery of a good emperor from dangerous illness, to obtain rain after a severe drought, and other similar benefits; and they relate many instances to assure devout readers that such prayers are generally heard and answered. They likewise affirm that no outward adoration can be pleasing to Tien unless it proceeds from a sincere heart.

From their most ancient times the Supreme Emperor of Heaven has been worshipped at stated seasons, with great solemnity. When a new emperor succeeded to the throne, it was always considered his duty to plough a portion of the ground, in token of humility, and cultivate a crop to be offered in sacrifice to Chang-ti. The empress feeds silk worms, and assists in manufacturing and embroidering rich silks, to be used as ornaments when these sheaf-offerings are carried in procession, and devoutly presented, by royal hands, to the Emperor of Heaven. Whenever these ceremonies have been omitted, or negligently performed, the Sacred Books declare that the displeasure of Chang-ti has soon after been manifested by extraordinary public calamities. Some of the early emperors, in addition to the customary agricultural offerings, kept a domestic park to rear six sorts of animals for sacrifice, twice a year, at the winter solstice and the summer solstice. On these occasions, the people were enjoined to do nothing, and think of nothing but joining with the emperor in worship of Chang-ti. In the reign of Tching-tang there was a distressing famine for seven years, occasioned by drought. The emperor having in vain offered a multitude of sacrifices, at last resolved to devote himself as a victim to appease the anger of Heaven. He took off his imperial robes, and, accompanied by the grandees of his court, went to a mountain some distance from the city, where with bare head and naked feet, in the posture of a criminal, he prostrated himself nine times before the Ruler of the Universe, and uttered the following prayer: "O Supreme Emperor, all the sacrifices I have offered to implore thy mercy have been in vain; therefore

it is doubtless I myself, who have drawn down so much misery on my people. May I dare to ask what my fault is? Is it the magnificence of my palace, or the luxuries of my table? Is it the number of my concubines? which, however, are not more than the laws allow me. I am sincerely desirous to repair all my faults by modesty, frugality, and temperance; and if this be insufficient, I offer myself as a victim to justice. Let me be punished, and my people spared. I shall be content to have thy thunderbolt fall on my head, if at the same time rain descends upon the earth, to relieve the miseries of my people." His prayer was answered. Clouds overspread the sky, and genial showers moistened the earth, which brought forth abundant harvests.

These Five Sacred Books favour belief in a multitude of Spirits, pervading the universe. They say nothing definite concerning future rewards and punishments; but a belief in the immortality of the soul is implied by the fact that they prescribe ceremonials to be performed for the souls of deceased ancestors, and speak of the virtuous departed as being near Chang-ti.

The Golden Age of the Past is much dwelt upon by their ancient commentators. One of them says: "All places were then equally the native country of every man. Flocks wandered in the fields without any guide; birds filled the air with their melodious voices; and the fruits grew of their own accord. Man lived pleasantly with the animals, and all creatures were members of the same family. Ignorant of evil, man lived in simplicity and perfect innocence." Another says: "In the first age of perfect purity, all was in harmony, and the passions did not occasion the slightest murmur. Man, united to sovereign reason within, conformed his outward actions to sovereign justice. Far from all duplicity and falsehood, his soul received marvellous felicity from heaven, and the purest delights from earth."

The first man is called by the Chinese Tai Wang, and the first woman Pao See. In one of The Five Volumes, called Chi King, it is said: "Tien placed man upon a high

mountain, which Tai Wang rendered fruitless by his own fault. He filled the earth with thorns and briars, and said, I am not guilty, for I could not do otherwise. Why did he plunge us into so much misery? All was subjected to man at first, but a woman threw us into slavery. The wise husband raised up a bulwark of walls; but the woman, by an ambitious desire of knowledge, demolished them. Our misery did not come from Heaven, but from a woman. She lost the human race. Ah, unhappy Pao See! thou kindled the fire that consumes us, and which is every day augmenting. Our misery has lasted many ages. The world is lost. Vice overflows all things, like a mortal poison." The commentator Lopi says: "After man had acquired false science, nature was spoiled and degraded. All creatures became his enemies. The birds of the air, the beasts of the field, the serpents and the reptiles, conspired to hurt him."

The Five Volumes are full of prophecies concerning a Golden Age in the Future. All these relate to the glory of the Chinese empire, which is one day to extend over the face of the whole earth. It is the universal belief that a Divine Man will establish himself on their Holy Mountain, and everywhere restore peace and happiness. This mountain is called Kou-En-Lun, and is supposed to be in the middle of the world. One of The Five Volumes, called Chan-Hai-King, thus describes it: "All that could be desired, wondrous trees, marvellous fountains, and flowery shades, are found in the hidden garden on that sacred hill. This mountain is the inferior palace of the Sovereign Lord. The animal Kaiming guards the entrance."

"The Lord looks with pleasure upon the Holy Mountain. It is the abode of peace. There grow none of the trees employed to make warlike instruments. It is an eternal kingdom. It is the work of the Most High. The Kingdom of the Middle is where the Holy Son of Heaven will come to reign. He allows no wicked men to enter there. He banishes them into the dark abodes of beasts and monsters. The subjects of that kingdom are called



heavenly people, because they are governed by the Holy Son of Heaven, who perfects them from within and without, and nourishes them by his supreme virtue and celestial doctrine, so that they cry out with joy, The Son of Heaven is truly the Father of his people, and Lord of the Universe."

"This is the Mountain of the Lord: these living fountains are the pure waters wherein the subjects of the Prince of Peace are to quench their thirst. He himself has chosen this mountain. He himself has opened the clear streams. It is hither that all the faithful nations must come. It is here that all the kings will meet."

One of the ancient commentators on the Sacred Books says: "We have learned from our ancestors that there assuredly is a mountain called Kou-En-Lun; though hitherto no one has found it." Another says: "A delicious garden, refreshed with zephyrs, and planted with odoriferous trees, was situated in the middle of the mountain, which was the avenue of heaven. The waters that moistened it flowed from a source called the Fountain of Immortality. He who drinks of it never dies. Thence flowed four rivers. A Golden River, betwixt the south and east; a Red River, between the north and east; a Peaceful River, between the south and west; and the River of the Lamb, between the north and west. These magnificent floods are the spiritual fountains of the Sovereign Lord, by which he heals nations and fructifies all things." "If you double the height of Kou-En-Lun it will become the Supreme Heaven, where Spirits live, the palace of the Great Lord and Sovereign Ruler."

The Five Volumes state that "the Source and Root of all is One. This Self-Existent Unity necessarily produced a second. The first and second, by their union, produced a third. These Three produced all."

"The ancient emperors solemnly sacrificed, every three years, to Him who is One and Three."

"Tien helps people of the inferior worlds. He gave them a guide and teacher, the faithful minister of the

Supreme Lord, to whom, out of love, he intrusted the government of the universe. Tien is The Holy One *without* a voice. The Holy One is Tien speaking *with* a voice." [That is, the Word.]

One of the old commentators says: "By consulting the ancient traditions, we know that though the Holy One will be born upon earth, yet he existed before anything was made."

One of the Five Volumes, called Y King, says: "The Holy One will unite in himself all the virtues of heaven and earth. By his justice the world will be re-established in the ways of righteousness. He will labour and suffer much. He must pass the great torrent, whose waves shall enter into his soul; but he alone can offer up to the Lord a sacrifice worthy of him."

An ancient commentator says: "The common people sacrifice their lives to gain bread; the philosophers to acquire reputation; the nobility to perpetuate their families. The Holy does not seek himself, but the good of others. He enriches others and impoverishes himself. He dies to save the world."

In one of The Five Volumes, called Chu King, it is written: "Tien, the Sovereign Lord, said to Venwang [The Prince of Peace]: I love pure and simple virtue, like thine. It makes no noise, it does not dazzle from without. It is not proud or forward. Seeing thee, one would say thou hadst no light, no knowledge, but to conform thyself to my laws."

"We expect our king. When he comes he will deliver us from all misery. He will restore us to new life."

A nephew of Confucius writes: "We expect this Divine Man, and he is to come after three thousand years." Another disciple of Confucius adds: "The people long for his coming, as the dry grass longs for the clouds and the rainbow."

The following extracts are from the Book of Chu King: "The Sovereign Lord of Heaven produced all the nations of the world, and reigns over them. He makes no excep-

tion of persons, but esteems virtue alone, loving men only so far as they worship him sincerely. He hears the prayers of the merciful, but he destroys the wicked. We ought to pray to him for immortal life."

"Perfection consists in being reunited to the Supreme Unity. The soul was at first luminous, but it was afterward obscured. It should be our earnest endeavour to restore it to its primitive light; and it is only by destroying all wrong desires, and all self-love, that we can perceive celestial reason. What is called reason is properly an attribute of Tien, the Supreme God. The light which he communicates to men is a participation of this reason. What is called reason in Tien is virtue in man, and, when reduced to practice, is called justice. The truly wise man remains within himself, and piety rules all his conduct."

"To think that we have virtue, is to have very little of it. Wisdom consists in being very humble, as if we were incapable of anything, yet ardent, as if we could do all."

"When thou art in the secret places of thy house, do not say, None sees me; for there is an Intelligent Spirit, who seeth all. Tien, the Supreme, pierces into the recesses of the heart, as light penetrates into a dark room. We must endeavour to be in harmony with his light, like a musical instrument perfectly attuned. We must receive from his hand, as soon as he opens it. He seeks to enlighten us continually; but, by our disorderly passions, we close the entrance to our souls."

"Mankind, overwhelmed with afflictions, seem to doubt of Providence; but when the hour of executing his decrees shall come, none can resist him. He will then show that when he punished, he was just and good, and that he was never actuated by vengeance or hatred."

These Five Books, and other volumes containing the recorded sayings of Confucius, are the standard literature of China, the basis of all their moral and political wisdom. Every schoolboy in the empire has committed them to memory from time immemorial, and to call in question anything they assert would be deemed the most alarming heresy.

There has always existed in China a tribunal called the Court of Rites, invested with full authority to condemn and suppress any hurtful innovations; and this has greatly contributed to the preservation of the ancient religion. But the plain practical teaching of Confucius had no marvels to overawe the imagination, and it prescribed no ascetic practices, or elaborate ceremonials, by which the sinner could mitigate remorse, and hope to reconcile himself with Divine Powers. Consequently, the populace manifested an inclination to adopt other forms of faith. Lao-kiun, sometimes called Lao-tseu, is supposed to have been the first who introduced foreign belief into China. He was cotemporary with Confucius, and founder of the sect called Tao-tse. Tradition reports that he voluntarily renounced the advantages of rank, and retired into the solitude of the forest, in the Land of the West; their name for India. The doctrines he taught indicate that he was a Hindoo devotee, but to what sect he belonged is unknown. He believed in the existence of One Supreme Being, invisible, eternal, and incomprehensible, called Tao, which means Reason, or Wisdom. Successive emanations from him were subordinate Spirits, who produced the world, and governed it as his agents. It was his favourite maxim that "Tao produced one; one produced two; two produced a third; and three produced all things." The science of Tao was the means of arriving at felicity and perfect freedom. This science could be obtained by severe mortification of the body, entire subjection of the passions, and devout contemplation. When a man arrived at this holy state, he was an immortal while he yet remained upon the earth. It was believed that he could foretell events, fly through the air, put back the course of the years, and ascend to heaven without dying. Lao-kiun was accustomed to say: "The Holy pronounced these words: He that takes upon himself the dust and filth of the kingdom, shall become king of the universe." He acquired great reputation for sanctity, and marvellous stories were told of his birth. It was said that he had existed from all eter-



nity; that he descended to earth, and was born of a virgin, black in complexion, described "marvellous and beautiful as jasper;" that when his mission of benevolence was completed, he ascended bodily alive into the Paradise above. His statue was placed in the emperor's palace, a splendid temple was erected to him, and he was worshipped as a god. His disciples were called, "Heavenly Teachers." They inculcated great tenderness toward animals, and considered strict celibacy necessary for the attainment of perfect holiness.

One morning a book filled with magical formulas and invocations to Spirits was found suspended on the principal gate of Pekin. The followers of Lao-kiun said it had descended from heaven in the night-time. The emperor Tehin-tsung, being among the converts to the new doctrine, went on foot to the city gate, in token of humility, received the volume with all reverence, enclosed it in a golden box, and carried it back to the palace, where it has ever since been carefully preserved, as the oracle of the sect, under the title of Tao-teking. From revelations contained in these writings, the teachers profess to know how to cast out Evil Spirits from those afflicted with diseases, to predict events from the aspect of the stars, and make gold by some mysterious process of alchemy and magic. They even persuaded one of the emperors that they had discovered how to distil a liquor which would confer immortal life on whoever drank it. The teachers of this sect have great influence with the populace, to whom they sell amulets to preserve them from evil, and innumerable small images of Spirits, and of saints who have become God. The successors of Lao-kiun are always honoured with the title of chief Mandarins. The head of the sect resides in a magnificent palace in the district of Kiang-si. A great concourse of people, among whom are some persons of rank, flock thither from the neighbouring provinces, to have diseases cured, or their fortunes told.

Such practices have always been ridiculed by the school of Confucius, and the Court of Rites has uniformly con-

demned them. In the third century after Confucius, the emperor, annoyed by the power thus obtained over the credulous multitude, ordered all books of magic to be burned, and put many professors of it to death; but some of the writings were secretly preserved, and afterward brought to light.

A new religion was subsequently introduced, concerning which the following traditions are preserved. In the twenty-fourth year of the reign of Tchao-Wang, on the eighth day of the moon, a light from the south-west illumined the palace of the king. The monarch summoned sages skilled in predicting the future, and inquired the meaning of this splendour. They showed him books wherein it was prophesied that such a light would be seen when a great saint was born in the West, and that one thousand years after his birth, his religion would spread into China. This was one thousand and twenty-nine years before Christ. Sixty-five years after Christ, the emperor Ming-ti dreamed that a man ten feet high, of the colour of gold, and glittering like the sun, entered his palace, and said: "My religion will spread over these parts." When the sages were consulted, they opened the annals of the empire and showed him how his dream corresponded with the prophecy which had been read to Tchao-Wang a thousand years before. He was so much impressed by the coincidence, that he immediately sent ambassadors to India, with directions to seek for the Holy One, and not return until they found him. These messengers encountered some of the disciples of Bouddha Sakia, and brought back his Sacred Books, with teachers to explain them. The doctrines of this sect have been described in the chapter on Hindostan. They have been very generally adopted in China, where Bouddha is known under the name of the God Fo. Five centuries after the introduction of this religion, there were three thousand temples of Fo in the Chinese empire, and the emperor himself was so attached to the new faith, that he resigned the government into the hands of his adopted son, that he might withdraw from all

worldly affairs, and devote himself entirely to meditation on divine things.

In one of the Sacred Books brought by the ambassadors, Bouddha is understood to refer to a master more ancient than himself, called by the Chinese *Om-i-to*, and by the Japanese *Am-i-da*. It is said this name, in Sanscrit, signifies The Infinite. It is apparently a variation of *Om*, which Hindoos hold so peculiarly sacred as the Word which issued from the mouth of Brahma, and produced all things. In China, it is written thousands and thousands of times on all their holy places. In their prayers, they pronounce it with *Fo*, believing they can thus obtain remission of sins.

Phu-sa, a follower of Bouddha, who lived early in our fourth century, is worshipped in China, as one of those saints who had become a Spirit of Light, and voluntarily descended to earth again from motives of benevolence. He is called "The son of Bouddha, born of his mouth," because his allegorical writings are supposed to have perfected the doctrines of his master. Bodhidharma, another of his followers, who fled from persecution in Hindostan, in our fifth century, took refuge in China, where he was received with distinguished favour by the emperor, and became his spiritual teacher. His name is held in religious veneration, and his office of imperial counsellor was the origin of an order of priests still existing, called Spiritual Princes of the Law.

The emperors of the Tartar dynasty have all embraced Lamaism, a branch of Buddhism, which will be presently explained. But whatever may be their personal predilections, the law obliges them to conform to the rites and ceremonies prescribed in the ancient Sacred Books of China, in common with all magistrates and public officers. The festivals of the old religion are scrupulously observed. Every new emperor guides the plough with his own hands, to raise grain for an offering to Chang-ti. At the winter solstice, the last week in December, and the summer solstice, the last week in June, all the shops are shut up,

the courts are closed, and no person is permitted to begin a long journey. The religious solemnities celebrated at those seasons are called Festivals of Gratitude to Tien. At the spring equinox, they set apart a day to implore the blessing of Tien on the fruits of the earth. At the autumnal equinox, they offer the first-fruits of the harvest, and return thanks.

Though the worship of Fo has been the prevailing religion of all parts of the Chinese empire for more than fifteen hundred years, it has never gained favour with a majority of their learned men, who are mostly of the school of Confucius. One of them argues thus: "This person, so cried up, who has come out of the West into China, passed, as they say, nine years on a mountain, in continual contemplation. He remained immoveable, with his eyes fixed upon the wall, without changing his position. Suppose every private person should take it into his head to follow this example, who would take care of cultivating the fields, and making the useful products of the loom? Whence would they have garments, and food to support life? Can it be imagined that a doctrine whose practice, if it were universal, would put the whole empire in confusion, is the true doctrine?" A letter from one of them, addressed to the emperor, says: "If the worship of Fo is tolerated, the people will go by hundreds to give their money and clothing to the priests; and I fear that young and old will finish by entirely neglecting their occupations. If you do not forbid these things, there will soon be persons who will mutilate their members to offer them to Fo, thus destroying our morality, and exciting the ridicule of people around us." Another writes thus to a believer in the popular doctrines: "If you do not burn paper in honour of Fo, if you do not place offerings upon his altar, he will be angry with you, and make punishment fall on your heads. Your god Fo must then be a miserable creature."

But these are merely the opinions of the learned. The populace have always been so attached to the religion of Fo, that the Court of Rites have deemed it prudent to ex-



press no opinion against it. When they meet annually at Peking, they merely condemn heresy in general terms, and leave the people free to follow their own opinions, provided they do not infringe upon any of the established laws of the empire. Many, who consider themselves disciples of Confucius, have mixed his maxims with various ideas borrowed from the Sacred Books of Fo. The women are almost universally attached to the popular worship. They have an altar in the most honourable part of the house, covered with gilded images of gods and saints; and not unfrequently husbands, who profess the old conservative faith of China, are seen bowing the knee to these household deities. One of the most universal of these images is that of Shing Mou, the Mother Goddess; the same title bestowed by ancient Egyptians on Isis with her infant Horus. It represents a woman with a glory round her head, and a babe in her arms, or seated on her knee. Tradition describes her as a virgin, who conceived by simple contact with a water-lily. The child, exposed in his infancy, was found and brought up by poor fishermen. He became a great man, and performed wonderful miracles. In wealthy houses, the sacred image of the Mother Goddess is carefully kept in a recess behind the altar, veiled with a silken screen.

Every Chinese believes he has an attendant Spirit, his own peculiar guardian. An image of it is kept in the house and worshipped three times a day, with prayers, and the fragrant incense of sandal wood. Sun, moon, fire, water, earth, and every department of nature, has a presiding deity. So has each trade and profession. Homage is often paid to some high mountain, or remarkably large tree, from the idea that a powerful Spirit resides therein. The image of a great Dragon, or monstrous Serpent, occurs everywhere in their temples, and on domestic altars. They say it lives in the sky, and has great influence over the affairs of men. Originally it doubtless represented the constellation of the Serpent, and they preserve this fragmentary form of the

old astronomical religion of India, Chaldea, and Egypt, without understanding the idea it embodied.

According to the statements of Jesuit missionaries in China, the doctrine of the transmigration of souls sometimes manifests itself in singular results. Father Le Comte says: "One day two priests of Fo passing the dwelling of a rich peasant saw three large ducks before the door. They immediately stopped before the house and began to weep bitterly. The peasant's wife came out to inquire the cause of their grief. They replied: 'We know that the souls of our fathers have passed into those creatures, and the fear that you may kill them renders us wretched.' The woman promised they should be carefully tended, and neither killed nor sold. But they answered: 'Perhaps your husband may not be so compassionate as you are; and if any accident should happen, it would be a great affliction to us.' After some further conversation, the woman felt such sympathy with their filial anxiety, that she gave them the ducks."

The same writer says: "They called upon me one day to baptize a sick person, an old man of seventy, who lived upon a small pension given him by the emperor. When I entered his room, he said: 'I thank you, Father, that you are going to deliver me from a heavy punishment.' I replied: 'That is not all. Baptism not only saves people from hell, but conducts them to a life of blessedness.' 'I do not comprehend what you say,' rejoined the invalid; 'and perhaps I have not sufficiently explained myself. I have for some time past lived on the emperor's benevolence. The priests, who are well acquainted with what happens to the soul after death, assure me that I shall be obliged to repay the emperor's generosity by becoming a post-horse to bring despatches from the provinces to court. They exhort me to perform my duty well, when I assume this new form of being, and to take care not to stumble, or wince, or bite. They tell me if I travel well, eat little, and am patient, I may by that means excite the compassion of the deities, who often convert a good beast into a man

of quality, and make him a considerable Mandarin. I cannot think of all this without trembling. Sometimes I dream that I am harnessed, and ready to set out at the first stroke of the rider. I then wake in a sweat, and am very unhappy, not being able to determine whether I am a man or a horse. Alas! what will become of me, when I shall be a horse in reality? They tell me, Father, that people of your religion are not subject to such miseries; that men continue to be men in the next world, as they are in this. I beseech you to receive me among you. I am ready to embrace your religion; for, whatever it may cost me, I had rather be a Christian than become a beast." The Jesuit Father baptized him, and the poor old man departed from this life happy in the belief that he should not be obliged to reappear on earth in the form of a post-horse.

In some places assemblies of women are held, to perform certain religious ceremonies as a preparation for death. A venerable old priest comes to preside over the meeting. He arranges the sacred images, and covers the walls of the house with paintings representing the various torments of the wicked after they leave the body. He sings anthems to Fo, while the women strike small kettles at intervals, and devoutly repeat the names of Omi-to and Fo. These festivals continue seven days, during which their principal care is to prepare and consecrate treasures for the other world. They build small houses with paper, and fill them with a great number of boxes painted and gilded. In these boxes they put hundreds of little rolls of gold and silver paper. They secure them with padlocks of paper, and fasten the house carefully. When the person who made the house dies, they burn it, with all its chests and keys, with many solemn ceremonials, for which the priests are paid. They believe the house will become a real house in the other world, and the rolls of paper will become genuine ingots of gold and silver. In the house they expect to reside, and with the treasures they hope to propitiate the eighteen guardians of souls in the regions of the dead.

With a view to laying up a store of religious merit, they repeat many prayers, and make many genuflexions before images; for the due performance of which the priests give them sealed certificates, varying in price, according to circumstances. These certificates are placed in a box, which is sealed up when the person dies, and is carried to the funeral with much ceremony. They call it Lou-in, which signifies a passport for travelling from one world to another.

They annually publish astronomical calculations of the motions of the planets, for every hour and minute of the year. They consider it important to be very exact, because the hours, and even the minutes, are lucky or unlucky, according to the aspect of the stars. Some days are considered peculiarly fortunate for marrying, or beginning to build a house; and the gods are better pleased with sacrifice offered at certain hours, than they are with the same ceremony performed at other times.

The doctrines of Fo, and the ritual of his worship, are contained in an old book, called Kio, which his numerous followers receive as sacred. An immense number of commentaries have been written upon it. It is said there is likewise a very ancient book in China, called Yekim, attributed to Fo himself; but it is written in hieroglyphics, and cannot be deciphered. All their holy books, and religious formulas, are written in a sacred language, called Pali, bearing a very close resemblance to the Sanscrit.

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It is supposed to have been about four hundred years after the Christian era, that a holy hermit went from India and established himself on a mountain in Central Thibet, thenceforth called Bouddha La, which signifies the Mountain of Bouddha. He soon attracted numerous disciples, who listened reverently to his teachings. Such was his reputation for holiness, that after his death the belief prevailed that he was Bouddha himself, who had again descended from Paradise, and assumed the form of a pious



anchorite, in order to effect the salvation of the people of Thibet. He taught them their forms of prayer, and left them a book called, "The Body of Doctrine," ascribed to Bouddha, and also some works of his own, which are held in great veneration. These, and all the other Sacred Books of Eastern Asia, are written in a modification of Sanscrit.

The worship of Bouddha remained confined to the region about Bouddha La until six hundred and twenty-nine years after Christ, when prince Srong Dsan Gambo, the founder of Thibetian greatness, married a princess of China, and a princess of Nepal, both educated in that religion. They brought with them images of Fo, Sacred Books and relics, and caused a great number of temples and buildings for devotees to be erected. The king established himself on the sacred mountain, called Bouddha La, around which soon grew up the city of Lassa, the present capital of Thibet. This popular prince, who had achieved so much for the prosperity of his country, was believed to be the identical old saint, who more than two hundred years before had taught on Bouddha La, and who had now come back again into a human body, to establish his religion permanently in Thibet. Sects arose in opposition to the new doctrines, either from attachment to some older form of faith, or from jealousy of the priestly power. Once the new religion was nearly overturned in a civil war between two rival brothers, contending for the throne, one in favour of Buddhism, and the other opposed to it. It suffered various vicissitudes until the close of our eleventh century, when a son of the reigning monarch became a devotee of that religion, and his father made him Superior of a monastery built for him. He afterward succeeded to the throne, and was the first one in that country who united in himself the offices of High Priest and King. He also was declared to be the renowned old hermit of Bouddha La, who had reappeared on earth yet again to govern his beloved Thibet.

This was the origin of that form of Buddhism called

Lamaism. Lama means Pastor of Souls, and is the name applied to all the priests. Dalai Lama, or Grand Lama, means the Great Pastor, the Supreme Pontiff, who is at the head of all ecclesiastical and civil affairs in Thibet. The highest object of worship is Shigemooni, which is their variation of the name of Bouddha Sakia Mouni. The next is his disciple, the famous old hermit of Bouddha La, whose soul is supposed to be regularly transmitted through the succeeding Grand Lamas of Thibet, to watch over the people, whom he loved so well that he left Paradise to instruct them in the true religion. When the Grand Lama dies, it is necessary to ascertain into what body his soul has passed. This can be done only by other Lamas, who fast and pray, and perform various ceremonies, to be guided aright. Those who think there are signs of his having appeared in their family, give information of it to the proper ecclesiastical authorities. The names of the candidates are written on little golden fish, which are shaken in an urn, and the first one taken out is proclaimed Grand Lama. He is carried to Lassa in triumphal procession, all the people prostrating themselves before him as he passes along. Disputes have sometimes arisen concerning the succession, and in some cases there have been bloody wars, causing the destruction of whole villages. But the belief remains deeply rooted that the immortal head of the church, by miraculous transmission of his soul, is always visibly present in the person of the Grand Lama, who is both pope and king. He is regarded as the vicegerent of God, with power to dispense divine blessings on whomsoever he will, either directly, or through the medium of subordinate Lamas. It is said fountains will flow at his command, even in the most parched deserts; that flowers spring up wherever his feet have passed, and that his person exhales celestial fragrance. He is supposed to see and know everything, even in the deepest recesses of the heart, so that he never has occasion to inquire on any subject. He is called, "The Immaculate," "The active Creator and Governor of the present World," "He who has clair-

voyant eyes," "The Word which produced the World." Thibet, China, the Mongols, and the Calmuck Tartars, acknowledge his sway. Crowds of pilgrims come with offerings from all quarters, to pay him homage, and obtain his blessing. Princes make the same prostrations and perform the same ceremonies as pilgrims of the meanest rank. He receives them seated on a splendid divan, in the attitude of the sacred images. He treats no one with more respect than another. He never rises, or uncovers his head, or salutes any one; but merely lays his hand on the head of the worshipper, who believes he has thereby obtained pardon for his sins. He sometimes distributes little pieces of consecrated dough, which are used for amulets to charm away Evil Spirits. At stated seasons he visits some of the great theological establishments, to expound the Sacred Books, and his expositions are received as divine authority. On state occasions, he wears a yellow mitre, and a purple silk mantle fastened on the breast with a clasp. In his hand he carries a long staff in the form of a cross. Though Thibet is politically subject to China, the Chinese emperor is subject to the Grand Lama in all ecclesiastical matters.

There are two other Lamas in Eastern Asia, believed to be incarnations of Bouddha, receiving his soul, or portions of it, by a similar process of transmission from generation to generation; but their holiness is of inferior degree, and they are in all respects subordinate to the Grand Lama at Lassa. It is a very common thing for persons belonging to the religious orders to be regarded as resuscitations of deceased saints. These are distinguished by the epithet "twice born," or "thrice born."

The powerful hierarchy, of which the Grand Lama is the head, consists of various ranks and classes. A High Lama is sent as nuncio to the Court of China, and supported there. There is an order called Spiritual Princes of the Law, and Masters of the Kingdom; these are the confidential advisers of the emperors. There are many large theological establishments called Lamaseries, exceedingly

similar to the monasteries in Europe. The origin and growth of these associations may be briefly stated. It has already been said that in very ancient times Hindoo devotees, in order to attain perfect holiness, withdrew from the world, and vowed themselves to chastity and poverty. The fame of their sanctity attracted disciples, many of whom lived in grottoes or cells, in the vicinity of their teacher, thus forming a brotherhood of saints. When a distinct order of priests grew out of this beginning, young men and boys were sent into the forest to be educated by them for the priesthood. These were temporary associations, which dispersed with change of circumstances. But the followers of Bouddha, being placed in opposition to the orthodox Hindoo religion, and relentlessly persecuted by its priests, naturally sought support and consolation by living together in congregations. As they were all devotees in the beginning, they naturally adopted a regular routine of prayers and ceremonies, as their models, the Hindoo hermits, had done. Afterward, when whole nations adopted their faith, the worldly gave up the entire management of religious affairs to them. Thus they became a new order of priests, whose appropriate business it was to educate successors to the offices they held. Bouddha's greatest offence against the orthodox Bramins was that he opened the religious life to all castes and all nations. He is represented as saying: "All men are equal; and my doctrines are a favour and grace to all mankind." This was a fruitful source of reproach with the Bramins, who were wont to say, contemptuously: "He and his followers teach even mean and criminal men, and receive them most improperly into a state of grace." Wherever his doctrines prevail, there is no hereditary priesthood, and the only distinctions are those which arise from difference of character. Women, also, were included in his unpopular doctrines of emancipation from the laws of caste. His followers could not overcome the prejudices of their native country in this respect, but in China and Thibet there are many associations of devout women, governed by the same laws



that regulate the Lamaseries. Such establishments are under the spiritual direction of a man, there being no such class of women as the ancient priestesses, or modern abbesses. There were formerly convents of women in the Birman Empire, but government suppressed them as prejudicial to population. Only old women are allowed to devote themselves to a life of celibacy. They shave their hair and wear white robes. They at first lived in the same building with men who had vowed themselves to a religious life, but to prevent immoralities they were afterward divided into separate establishments. These women keep the temples in order, accompany funerals, bring water for ceremonies of purification, and other similar offices. Women in Buddhist countries, as in all parts of Asia, are in an enslaved condition. Polygamy is allowed, and the wealthy sometimes have harems.

In the Lamaseries there is a complicated division of ranks, each with appropriate duties, and all are bound to obey the Superior implicitly. It is common to place children of five or six years old in Lamaseries, where they learn to read and write, and perform various services about the house. At twenty-one years of age they can be received into the brotherhood, after examination. On these occasions the candidate is required to affirm solemnly that he is of the required age, that he was born in wedlock, that he has consent of parents, is in debt to no one, free from hereditary disease or bodily defect, not sprung from a race of dwarfs or giants, and not under the influence of sorcerers, or Evil Spirits from the woods and mountains. These preliminaries being settled, the parents give a feast. Afterward, the young man shaves his head, and in token of renouncing old ties, he drops his name and takes another. If asked to what country he belongs, he replies: "I have no country. I spend my time in such or such a Lamasery." Every one is free to quit, whenever he judges it best to return to the world. Each member brings with him a cup, pitcher, dish, and mat to sleep on. They are forbidden to kindle a fire to prepare food for themselves.

They must depend on the offerings of the charitable, or what they can gain by begging. Mendicants are generally sent out into the environs once a week, but they are not allowed to demand anything, or to manifest any discontent when they are refused. They all take their meals together, it not being permitted to eat alone. They must not swallow food after sundown, or have a light in the evening, for fear of destroying some insect thereby. Some of the Lamas are so scrupulous on this point, that when they ride they are constantly turning their horses this way and that, to avoid trampling on some insect or reptile. If they chance to kill one, they fast and pray, and perform various ceremonies to atone for it. The more enlightened Lamas say they approve of such precautions, not because a human soul may have transmigrated into the animal, but because men of prayer, who seek to live in communion with the Deity, ought to be merciful and gentle toward all things. Though not allowed to kill any creature, they are permitted to eat the flesh of an animal that came to its death by accident. The laity in most Buddhist countries are not so scrupulous on this point, and if meat is offered to religious mendicants, they can often be induced to eat it, by assurances that the animal was not killed with the intention of offering it to them. What remains of their meals is not allowed to be reserved; it must be distributed to the poor, or to strangers, or to the youths who attend the school, or even to animals. Consequently, these establishments are always surrounded by a crowd of beggars. Inmates of the highest rank are as simple in dress and food as the lowest. The men are expressly forbidden to pass a night in the buildings appropriated to women, and women are not allowed to remain over night in any of the Lamaseries. If the vow of perpetual chastity is violated, the culprit is severely punished, and for a second offence expelled. It is said their manners are generally pure, which is more likely to be the case from their freedom to return to a worldly mode of life whenever they choose. Among the Birmans, the violation of their vow of chastity is pun-

ished by death in the flames. The Sacred Books are very emphatic on this point. In the "Forty-Two Points of Instruction," it is said: "Bouddha, the Supreme of Beings, manifesting his doctrine, pronounced these words: There is no passion more violent than voluptuousness. Happily there is but one such passion. If there were two, not a man in the whole universe could follow the truth."

"Beware of fixing your eyes upon women! If you find yourself in their company, let it be as though you were not present. If you speak with them, guard well your hearts. Let your conduct be irreproachable. Keep ever saying to yourselves: We Lamas, while we live in this world of corruption, must be like the Water Lily, which immersed in mud contracts no stain."

"The man who walks in the path of holiness must remember that the passions are as dry grass near a great fire. He who is jealous of his virtue, should flee on the first approach of the passions."

"The man who, striving after holiness, endeavours to extirpate the roots of his passions, is like one passing the beads of a rosary through his fingers. By taking one bead after another, he easily attains the end; so by conquering evil tendencies, one by one, the soul attains to perfection."

Buddhists are not much addicted to self-tortures, which prevail so extensively in Hindostan. Celibacy and frequent fasts are the chief penances the religious impose upon themselves. But though they rarely follow the example of Bouddha in severe bodily inflictions, they are prone to imitate his habits of profound contemplation. At such times, they say his body remained perfectly motionless, and his senses unaffected by any external object. He then became a recipient of divine revelations, which he communicated to his disciples. Those among his followers, who are desirous to obtain similar supernatural gifts, consecrate a large portion of their time to profound meditation. Some of the Lamas become hermits, living in the holes of rocks, or in small wooden cells fastened to the sides of

mountains. In some instances, these places are so inaccessible, that food can be conveyed to them only by means of a bag let down with a long rope. Some inhabit gloomy and almost impenetrable forests, infested with tigers and serpents. Some of them live in communities in the deserts, or on the sides of mountains, each one in a little cave, or wooden cell. In some of these associations, it is part of their daily ceremonies to scourge themselves with a small whip. They consider this as an expiation for sins, which will be accepted in lieu of sufferings in another stage of existence. Some live on lonely islands, which can be approached only in winter, on the ice. At that inclement season, the devout often carry them tea, butter, and rice, and receive in return blessings and prayers, which are believed to be very efficacious in producing fruitful pastures and numerous flocks.

The Buddhists have in their temples many images of saints, who are believed to have obeyed the following precept of their Sacred Books, and to have obtained the reward it promises: "Annihilate thyself; for as soon as thou ceasest to be thyself, thou wilt become one with God, and return into his being." Innumerable are the miracles ascribed to these saints, and to others who follow their example. Their garments, and the staffs with which they walk, are supposed to imbibe some mysterious power, and blessed are they who are allowed to touch them. It is a great branch of business in the Lamaseries to make images of the saints, and consecrate them to sell to devotees. Images of Bouddha himself of course rank above all others. Great is the merit of him who causes one to be made, and presents it to a temple. The priesthood have a tradition that Bouddha promised whoever consecrated an image to him should never go to any of the hells, or be born a slave or a woman, or be subject to blindness, deafness, or any deformity. Worshippers implore the intercession of saints to obtain forgiveness or blessings for them; and there are many marvellous accounts of the images bowing their heads, and moving their lips, or eyes, in answer to such



prayers. Temples are often built in honour of saints, and their relics deposited in the most sacred part of the building. These are believed to have the same power to work miracles which the saint himself possessed. Therefore, places where the most celebrated relics are preserved, attract crowds of pilgrims. In a temple at Ceylon is a tooth said to have been Bouddha's. It is kept in a golden case set with gems, and the case is enclosed within four others, all covered with costly jewels. Long pilgrimages are made to obtain a sight of it, and it is worshipped with profoundest veneration.

Prayers, and pious maxims, printed on small bits of paper, command a ready sale at the Lamaserics. They have no moveable types, but print them coarsely from wooden blocks. Some of the Lamas obtain a living by transcribing the Sacred Books for purchasers. Some of their manuscript editions are really superb, with rich illustrations, and highly ornamented characters. Herbs gathered on sacred mountains, and holy water brought from sacred rivers, or consecrated by the benediction of priests, are profitable articles of commerce, because they are supposed to be invested with supernatural power to cure diseases, and keep off Evil Spirits. In Japan, the priests sell a form of words, which they assure purchasers will not only defend them against Evil Spirits in this world, but will serve as passports to felicity in the life to come. Some travellers assert that they borrow money for religious purposes, and promise an equivalent in the good things of Paradise. As security, they give the lender a writing, which he is to carry with him to the other world, to prove the amount of his claims. All Buddhists retain the old Hindoo belief that nearly all departed souls remain for a while in regions of punishment, graduated according to the sins they have committed in the body. There they go through a process of purification, by fire, water, and other means, and are thus prepared to ascend to such a degree of Paradise as is proportioned to their merits. Prayers and oblations from the living are

supposed to be accepted by the Higher Powers, in lieu of these purifying sufferings; therefore, the more prayers and gifts are offered, the shorter is the term of punishment. Priests are supposed to be divinely instructed concerning the most efficacious forms of prayers and ceremonies; and in this way the pious affection of relatives and friends becomes a lucrative source of revenue to the Temples and Lamaseries as it was to the Bramins of Hindostan, from the most ancient times.

Some of the Lamas are rich, others are poor. The offerings of pilgrims are divided among them according to their rank. Some of them manufacture hats, boots, and clothing for the establishment. Some keep cows and sell butter and milk to their brethren. Some spend all their time in collecting donations for the Temples and Lamaseries. The members of these religious communities are generally divided into four classes. The first class devote themselves to mysticism, or precepts of the contemplative life. The second study the Liturgy, and are expounders of religious ceremonies. The third prepare themselves for physicians, principally by the study of botany, as they use only vegetable medicines, concerning which they are said to possess much valuable information. The fourth class are called The Faculty of Prayers. They are expected to be able to recite by heart the prayers in the Sacred Books for all occasions. They are most in demand, and best paid, consequently the most numerous.

The Lamaseries are generally more or less endowed by the government, and there is good reason for it; for in them are concentrated all the intellectual cultivation there is in those countries. The Lamas are the only physicians, astronomers, architects, sculptors, and painters. They occupy themselves very much with the study and composition of religious works. Their commentaries on the Sacred Books are very voluminous. At stated periods, people assemble in the temples to hear them read and explain the precepts of Bouddha, and other great saints. But their principal occupation is the education of youth;

not merely those devoted to priestly life, but also those intended for worldly professions. All the Lamaseries are schools, where instruction is given gratis, and poor children are fed. In China, Thibet, Birmah, and Japan, it is uncommon to find a man belonging to the Buddhist religion, who is too ignorant to read and write. This is one of the good effects of breaking down the monopoly of privileged classes, so tenaciously preserved in ancient Egypt and Hindostan. In the upper class of seminaries, philosophy, astronomy, medicine, and theology are taught. It is true these studies are mixed up with magical rites, exorcisms to cast out Evil Spirits, and other ideas which indicate the infancy of knowledge; but the literature which everywhere follows in the train of Buddhism, imperfect as it is, deserves the credit of waking up nations previously slumbering in profoundest ignorance. When Turner visited Thibet in 1783, he found their teachers acquainted with the satellites of Jupiter, the ring of Saturn, and the use of mercury as a medicine.

The discipline in these schools is very strict. The pupils sit in an open enclosure enduring the cold in winter and the heat in summer, while they listen to professors seated under a canopy, expounding the Sacred Books. Men with whips are in attendance, to punish the slightest infraction of the rules. If the students fail to recite the lessons or prayers given them to learn, they are severely whipped, or made to pass a cold night out of doors, with little or no clothing. They themselves say it is impossible to learn the prayers well, without being punished in the process. They told the French missionaries that all the Lamas who could not recite prayers perfectly, or cure diseases, or predict the future correctly, were those who in youth had not been well beaten by their masters.

The inmates of the Lamaseries are generally very benevolent to the poor, and extremely hospitable and fraternal toward travellers and strangers. M. Huc, a Jesuit missionary, speaks thus of his visit to the celebrated Lamasery of Kounboun, in Tartary: "The reception given us re

called to our thoughts those monasteries raised by the hospitality of our own religious ancestors, in which travellers and the poor always found refreshment for the body and consolation for the soul."

The more enlightened Lamas manifest a beautiful spirit of toleration toward other religions. When the missionaries Huc and Gabet expounded Christianity to some of the Lamas of Thibet, they listened respectfully, and quietly replied: "Well, we do not suppose that our prayers are the only prayers in the world." Upon one occasion, a Lama of high rank, one of the Incarnations of Bouddha, arrived with a numerous retinue at the inn where these missionaries had put up for the night. When he sought an interview with them, they treated him kindly, but without reverence, not rising when he entered, and remaining seated while talking with him, though everybody else prostrated themselves before him. He took no offence, but was extremely gentle and affable in his manners. A Roman Catholic Breviary was lying on the table, and he admired its gilded edges and rich binding. When they explained what it was, he raised it reverentially to his forehead, saying: "It is your book of prayer. We ought always to honour and respect prayer." He supposed them to be English, or Russians. When told they were French, he exclaimed: "Ah, the West contains so many kingdoms! But what matter where you are from? All men are brothers." In answer to some inquiries by the same missionaries, the Regent of Thibet replied: "Even if our laws did prohibit strangers from entering our country, those laws could not affect *you*. Men of prayer belong to all countries. They are strangers nowhere. Such is the doctrine taught by our Holy Books."

All the religious orders preserve old-fashioned simplicity with regard to food and raiment. None of them go without clothing, like some of the Hindoo devotees; but some of them wear merely enough for purposes of modesty, and all dress very plainly. The universal colour of their garments is deep yellow. In Birmah and Siam the persons



of Lamas are inviolable, and the lands belonging to Lamaseries are exempted from taxation. But the princes watch them with jealous eyes, and do not allow them to meddle in the least degree with political affairs. Any indulgence of sensual appetites is at once punished by a public and disgraceful expulsion from the brotherhood; but this penalty is rarely incurred. It is probably owing to such restriction of power, and watchfulness over morals, that the clergy of Birmah are generally exemplary men, and have a respectable knowledge of literature, compared with other classes in Asia. Among the Lamas of Thibet, and other Buddhist countries, there are also many individuals of great worth and considerable learning; but a large proportion of them are too ignorant to understand the Sanscrit prayers, which they repeat by rote. Among the Calmucks there is an inferior order of the clergy, who are allowed to marry; and innovations of this kind have crept into some other countries. But celibacy is everywhere required of those who fill the higher offices of the priesthood.

As the early devotees changed into a numerous and powerful body of priests, they gradually relaxed in devotional exercises that required much effort, and substituted in their stead an endless routine of ceremonies. The sound of the tom-tom and gong is perpetually heard from the Lamaseries, summoning the inmates to the performance of some rite. They have prayers and chants three times a day, morning, noon, and evening, as the Bramins did in Hindoo forests, ages and ages ago. Like them, also, they practise daily ablutions, and place offerings on the tombs of ancestors, with prayers to shorten the term of unhappy transmigration for their souls. They have a great number of prescribed formulas, among which they regard as most efficacious their six mystic syllables, "*Om mani padma houn*," said to have been revealed to them by the first old anchorite on Bouddha La. A vast number of commentaries have been written to explain these holy words. *Om* is the mystic term to express the Creative Word. *Mani*

is said to signify a gem ; *padma*, a lotus ; and *houm*, amen. They attach as much value to this phrase, as Hindoos do to *Om* and the *Gayatri*. To repeat it often and devoutly is thought to be the most efficacious mode of escaping from unhappy transmigrations, and of becoming finally absorbed in Bouddha. People are continually saying over these syllables on their rosaries, they are repeated thousands of times in their public ceremonies, and are everywhere inscribed on the walls of temples, the rocks of sacred mountains, the banners carried in procession, and the flags floating over their doors. Rich devotees maintain, at their own expense, companies of Lamas to travel over hill and dale, carving this sacred formula on rocks and stones. Both priests and people attribute magical virtue to the recitation of these syllables, independent of the thought or feeling with which they are pronounced. One of the religious writers of Thibet says : " Mount Sumeru can be weighed in a balance ; the great ocean can be drained drop by drop ; the immense forests of the kingdom of snows (Thibet) can be reduced to ashes, and the atoms of these ashes can be counted ; the drops of a continual rain during twelve months might be numbered ; but the virtues of a single recitation of these six syllables are incalculable."

Like the Hindoo hermits of very ancient times, they make use of long rosaries of seed, or beads. Devotees may be continually met, fingering their beads as they walk, and repeating, "*Om mani padma houm*." Some of their rosaries are very richly ornamented. In all the great Lamaseries they have machines which resemble a barrel and turn on an axle. They are composed of a vast number of sheets of paper, written all over with prayers, and pasted together till they form a substance thick as a board. When set in motion, it turns of itself for a long while, and he who turns has the merit of having said all the prayers it contains. Sometimes quarrels arise among the devotees, because one comes and stops the barrel set in motion by another, and turns it again for his own benefit. All the streams near Lamaseries are interrupted by dams, con-

structed for the purpose of turning numerous prayer-wheels, the motion of which is considered equivalent to repeating prayers day and night for those who erected them. The Tartars place them over their fireplaces, where, being moved by the draught, they are supposed to repeat prayers incessantly for the safety and prosperity of the household. In Japan, almost every mountain, hill, and cliff, is sacred to some presiding saint, to whom travellers are requested, by inscribed tablets, to address prayers as they pass. As this would occupy too much time, upright posts are placed on the roadside, with an iron plate fastened on the top; and turning a plate is equivalent to repeating a prayer.

Priests teach that whosoever consecrates a son or a daughter to the monastic life, is not only a religious benefactor, but thereby becomes a relation of Bouddha. The princess Sanghamitta and her brother are mentioned in early records as having been thus consecrated by their royal parents. They wrought many miracles, "became like the Sun and the Moon, illuminating the whole land with the religion of Bouddha," and finally, while yet in the body, attained complete absorption into the Supreme Being. A princess in Ceylon hearing the renown of their sanctity, became interested to know by what process it was acquired; and Sanghamitta went to that island, to initiate her into the holy life. Several other women joined them, and lived together in secluded apartments, where they spent their time in contemplation and prayer. This is supposed to have been the beginning of Buddhist nunneries.

Lamas are exceedingly numerous. In the Chinese empire alone there are reckoned to be more than a million. In Tartary, all the male children, except the oldest sons, are brought up as Lamas. In Siam they are called Talapoins; in China, Ho Chang; but European writers generally style all Buddhist monks and priests, Bonzes. The reverence bestowed on saintly character, and the facility of obtaining a living by assuming it, are of course strong temptations to the indolent and selfish, who practise

many impositions on the credulous people. The old Asiatic idea that diseases are occasioned by Evil Spirits, who have taken possession of the human body, and can be cast out by forms of prayer, or at the command of holy men, is universally believed. In Tartary, rich families are sometimes told that it is necessary to give the demon a rich suit of clothes, or a valuable horse, to induce him to depart. When the required articles are bestowed, the Lamas recite prayers and perform ceremonies, a week or fortnight, till the invalid is either dispossessed of the demon, or dies. In the latter case, mourners are comforted by the assurance that his soul has transmigrated to a much happier state than it possibly could have done without their prayers. Sometimes they make an image to represent the Evil Spirit, on which they pronounce curses, accompanied by furious gestures and the din of noisy instruments, and at last they set fire to the image. The expense of casting out a devil sometimes proves ruinous to the fortune of a patient. Such practices are disapproved by the better sort of Lamas. The Superior of one of the Lamaseries said to the French missionaries: "When a person is ill, the recitation of prayers is proper; for Bouddha is the master of life and death. It is he who rules the transmigration of beings. To take remedies is also fitting; for the great virtue of medicinal herbs comes to us from Bouddha. That devils may possess rich persons is credible, but to give them horses, garments, and other rich presents to induce them to depart, is a fiction invented by ignorant and deceiving Lamas, who thus try to accumulate wealth at the expense of their brothers."

Many of the devotees have no settled abode, but are always wandering about asking alms. In Japan especially, crowds of men and women, with shaven heads, are traversing the country in all directions, living at the expense of the industrious. The character of many of them is said to be far from stainless. Sometimes they attempt to excite compassion by fastening to their neck and feet a heavy chain, which they drag through the streets with great



effort. They stop before the houses and cry out pitifully: "You see how much it costs us to expiate your sins. Can you not afford us some trifling alms?" Sometimes they hire men to carry them through the streets in a chair stuck over with a thousand nails, in such a manner that it is impossible to stir without being wounded. To those who pass by, the devotee proclaims: "Behold, I am shut up in this chair for the good of your souls. I am resolved never to leave it till all the nails are bought. Every nail is worth sixpence. If you buy one, it will certainly become a source of happiness to you and your families, and you will also perform a religious act; for you will bestow charity not on the priests, but on the God Fo himself, for whom we intend to build a temple."

In view of these extravagances, it is just to remember that they are disapproved by the more enlightened. The Regent of Thibet said to the French missionaries: "You have doubtless seen and heard much to blame in Tartary and Thibet, but you must not forget that the numerous errors and superstitions you may have observed were introduced by ignorant Lamas, and are rejected by well-informed Buddhists."

The spirit of pilgrimage prevails to a great extent. Around the most celebrated Lamaseries there is a continual putting up and pulling down of tents, and the coming and going of pilgrims from far and near, on oxen, horses, or camels. One of the penances they impose upon themselves is to make the circuit of the Lamaseries, prostrating themselves, with their foreheads to the ground, at every step. When the buildings are of considerable extent, it is difficult to complete the circuit thus in the course of a long day. They must not pause to take nourishment, for if the prostrations are once suspended after they are begun, all the merit of the performance is lost. At each prostration the body must be stretched flat on the ground, the forehead touching the ground, the arms spread out, and the hands joined as if in prayer. They continue this through driving storms and the keenest cold. Others perform the circuit

carrying a load of books, the weight of which is prescribed by the Lamas. When the task is completed they are deemed to have recited all the prayers contained in the books they carry. Some merely walk the circuit, telling the beads of their long rosaries, or turning a prayer-wheel, which they carry in their right hand. Some pilgrims undertake fearfully long journeys, prostrating themselves at every step. Near Lassa is a high mountain, rugged and almost inaccessible. The pilgrim who clammers to the top of it is thought to have obtained remission of all his sins. The offerings of the pilgrims are a great source of revenue to the Lamaseries. When a devotee of wealth or rank presents himself, one of the Incarnations of Bouddha usually presides over the ceremony of reception. His share in the offerings is fifty ounces of silver, a piece of red or yellow silk, a pair of boots and a mitre, arranged in a basket decorated with flowers and ribbons, and covered with a rich scarf. The pilgrim prostrates himself on the steps of the altar, and places the basket at the feet of the representative of Bouddha. A pupil takes it up, and in return presents a scarf to the pilgrim. The Superior Lama preserves meanwhile the impassive character suited to an embodied Divinity.

The humble huts of the primitive devotees of this religion gradually changed into spacious and elegant mansions. At the present day, Lamaseries are the most beautiful edifices in Asia, except the royal palaces. They are usually situated in picturesque and solitary places, especially on the tops of mountains. Adjoining them is always a temple dedicated to Bouddha, or some saint. They usually terminate in a pyramid, which is a form of architecture sacred to gods, priests, and kings. Rich men, who wish to expiate their sins, and purchase happiness in a future existence, often build and endow them for public hospitals and seminaries. If they are well situated, and have ample funds, devotees do not fail to present themselves in sufficient numbers to fill them speedily. Sometimes separate houses are enclosed within a high wall; some-

times one large building is divided into various suites of apartments; kitchen, hospital, prison, barber's office, treasury, dining hall, library, reception room for strangers, and sleeping apartments. These buildings are exceedingly numerous. The city of Lassa alone contains three thousand. Of course the most magnificent of them all is on the famous old mountain of Bouddha La, where the Supreme Pontiff of all the Lamas has his permanent residence. It is an aggregation of edifices, in the centre of which rises the temple of the Grand Lama, four stories high, and overlooking them all. It terminates in a dome entirely covered with golden plates, and surrounded with a peristyle, the columns of which are covered with gold. It contains a vast number of apartments, adorned with innumerable pyramids of gold and silver, and a great number of sacred images made of the same precious metals. Within the precincts of this Lamasery reside twenty thousand Lamas, whose principal occupation it is to serve and honour the Incarnation of Bouddha. Devotees will live very sparingly, and even suffer for food and clothing, that they may save money enough to make a pilgrimage to this holy place, and purchase perfumes to burn before the images. Strongly odorous flowers are a favourite offering, and they burn large quantities of the fragrant sandal-wood for incense. Winding-sheets consecrated by the Grand Lama, and covered with printed sentences from the Sacred Books, are sold in large numbers, it being supposed that those who are buried in them are sure of a happy transmigration. There have been some instances of pilgrims throwing themselves headlong from the steep rocks, as soon as they had completed their prayers and ceremonies; believing that their souls were then in a purified state, and sure of going directly to Paradise. There is a continual throng coming and going around Bouddha La, but they observe a profound and reverential silence. Two avenues lined with magnificent trees connect the mountain with the city of Lassa, about a mile distant. Here are swarms of pilgrims continually passing to and fro, reciting the mystic syllables

on their long rosaries. In the sanctuary of the central temple, resplendent with gold and brilliant colours, is placed a rich divan for the Grand Lama. At the hour appointed for prayer a large conch is sounded toward the four cardinal points. The great gate opens, and the Grand Lama walks in and seats himself. The attendant Lamas leave their boots in the vestibule, enter barefoot, and prostrate themselves three times before him. They then seat themselves in a circle, each according to his dignity. The signal for prayer is given by tinkling a little bell, followed by psalms in double chorus. Kings and noble personages flock to this shrine from all quarters, and enrich the temple with costly offerings.

Tartar Lamaseries are not to be compared with those of Thibet in extent or wealth, but some of them are splendid edifices. The Tartars are exceedingly frugal in their own dress and mode of living, but lavish in everything connected with worship. Lamas travel all over the country, from tent to tent, with authenticated passports, begging, in the name of Bouddha, for money to build a temple or a Lamasery. The rich give ingots of gold or silver; the less prosperous give camels, horses, or oxen; and even the poorest cheerfully offer furs and hair ropes. In this way, immense sums are collected, wherewith superb structures are erected in the deserts. Among these the most venerated is the Lamasery of Kounboum, famous to the remotest confines of Tartary. The following are the traditions concerning it. A woman, who had become old and was childless, fainted and fell senseless on a rock, whereon was inscribed various sentences in honour of Bouddha. From contact with these holy words, she conceived and bore a miraculous son, named Tsong Kaba. When he was born, he had a white beard and a majestic countenance, and immediately began to utter wise sayings concerning the nature and destiny of man. At three years old, he resolved to renounce the world, and devote himself to religious contemplation. His mother reverently approved his purpose, and prepared him by shaving his head, throwing his fine long



hair outside the tent. Instantly there sprang from it a tree, which exhaled exquisite fragrance, and on every leaf were inscribed characters in the sacred language. Tsong Kaba spent his days on summits of the wildest mountains, or in the recesses of deep ravines; fasting, praying, and meditating on divine things. He tasted no flesh, and respected the life of the minutest insect. At eighty-two years old, he died; or, according to their mode of speaking, "he ascended to the Heaven of Rapture, and was absorbed in Bouddha." The mountain at the foot of which he was born, became a famous place of pilgrimage. Lamas from all parts assembled there and built cells; and thus by degrees was formed the Lamasery of Kounboun, whose name signifies Ten Thousand Images, in allusion to the marvellous tree, which sprang from the hermit's hair, with characters in the sacred writing on all its leaves. When the emperor Khang Hi made a pilgrimage to this place, he erected a silver dome over the tree. Plants gathered on this sacred mountain are bought by pilgrims at a great price. The young students of botany go out in troops and gather great quantities of herbs and roots, which are stored for sale.

The Buddhist temples are covered inside and out with carvings in wood or stone, representing lions, tigers, elephants, birds, reptiles, and all sorts of animals, real and imaginary. Some of these works are executed with great delicacy and beauty. The interior is filled with paintings and statues, illustrating the life of Bouddha, and the various transmigrations of celebrated saints. The Lamas themselves are the only artists employed in these decorations, which are generally of a fantastic character. Most of the personages represented in the statues and medallions have a monstrous and grotesque appearance. Bouddha alone is an exception. He is always represented noble and majestic, with large full eyes and long curling hair. The Lamas are less successful in painting, than in sculpture, being faulty in their drawing, and partial to gaudy colouring. But, according to the testimony of M. Huc, they

sometimes produce specimens of considerable beauty. While travelling among the Mongols, he says: "In a great temple, called the Temple of Gold, we saw a picture which struck us with astonishment. It was a life-size representation of Bouddha, seated on a rich carpet, surrounded by a kind of glory, composed of miniatures allegorically representing his thousand virtues. This picture was remarkable for the expression of the faces, the gracefulness of the design, and the splendour of the colouring. All the personages seemed full of life. An old Lama, who attended us, told us it was a treasure of remotest antiquity, comprehending on its surface the whole doctrine of Bouddha; that it was not a Mongol painting, but came from Thibet, and was executed by a saint of The Eternal Sanctuary," meaning the temple where the Grand Lama resides. Borri, a Jesuit missionary to Cochin China, says he saw an empty recess behind the high altar in Buddhist temples, and, upon inquiry, was informed that it was consecrated to the Supreme Being, who was invisible and incomprehensible, and therefore not to be represented by any image.

The monuments of Buddhist devotion are exceedingly numerous. On the terrace of a very old temple at Gaya, the following inscription, in the Birman language, was found a few years since: "This is one of the eighty-four thousand shrines erected by Sri Dharm Asôka, ruler of the world, at the end of the two hundred and eighteenth year of Bouddha's annihilation." Some remains of the places of worship are immensely massive, and bear marks of extreme antiquity. Mr. Knox, speaking of Ceylon, says: "The votaries of Bouddha took pride in erecting temples and monuments to his memory, as if they had been born solely to hew rocks and great stones, and lay them in heaps." The largest of the subterranean temples on that island is one hundred and ninety feet long, and forty-five feet high. It contains a recumbent figure of Bouddha, thirty feet in length. One of the most remarkable of these stupendous structures is the gigantic temple in Java, called

Boro Buddor. It is in a ruinous condition, but full of elaborate carving and colossal images. In Meaco, a city of Japan, is a magnificent temple erected to Dai Bod, by which they mean the God Bouddha. It contains the image of a gigantic Bull, butting his horns against the Mundane Egg. This huge animal is said to be formed of massive gold, with a collar about his neck adorned with precious stones. The egg is on the surface of a large stone basin filled with water, in which the feet of the bull are immersed. The basis of the whole is a large square altar, engraved with many ancient characters. Prints of Bouddha's feet are shown on rocks in various countries. Several of these rocks are covered with sculptured writing, and on some of them he is represented as crushing a serpent under his heel. This was probably intended to signify that by his ascension he vanquished death. There are the same representations of Crishna on very ancient monuments in Hindostan, doubtless for the same reason, for the serpent was a common Oriental emblem for the destruction of life.

The Buddhists are exceedingly devout; but, with the exception of a few contemplative Lamas, they are not inclined to mysticism. They are generally fond of pageantry, such as showy processions to their temples and sacred places, and imposing ceremonies in the Lamaseries. They delight in pungent perfumes and gorgeous colours. Their worship is of a clamorous character, consisting of loud chants and prayers, accompanied by large and noisy instruments, such as gongs, drums, cymbals, trumpets, and fifes. They make frequent prostrations on their house-tops, and are always fingering a rosary, or murmuring prayers, even while engaged in their daily avocations. "As evening twilight approaches, all the Thibetian men, women and children, stop business and meet together in the public squares, where they all kneel down and chant prayers. In a large town, these sounds produce an immense solemn harmony. These vesper prayers vary according to the season of the year."

They have solemn ceremonies to welcome the new moon and the full moon, and changes of the seasons. On the last day of the full moon all the Lamas in Tartary assemble at midnight, in state mantles and mitres, and chant prayers. The ceremony is concluded with loud cries, accompanied by a tremendous noise of drums, trumpets, and conch shells. This custom is said to have been established to drive away Evil Spirits, which infested the people and cattle.

On certain occasions, the Tartar Lamas recite prescribed formulas, and toss up little pictures of horses in the air, with the belief that Bouddha will transform the bits of paper into living horses, for the relief of travellers in the deserts.

There are festivals during which the Buddhists, in some countries, scourge themselves before the altars, as did the votaries of Isis in ancient Egypt. The degree of sin expiated is according to the number and severity of the blows.

The Feast of Lanterns in China bears strong resemblance to a Hindoo custom, and to the Egyptian festival in honour of Neith. On that evening every Chinese throughout the empire lights a lantern. Gorgeous lanterns of painted glass, illuminated with torches, are suspended from all the arches and towers. It is said two hundred millions of lamps are burning on that occasion.

In Birmah a white elephant is kept near the royal palace, sumptuously fed and magnificently caparisoned. People prostrate themselves before him, and bring valuable offerings, which he is taught to take with his trunk. This homage is said to originate in a belief that the soul of Bouddha once animated a white elephant in the course of its manifold transmigrations.

The doctrines and ceremonies of Buddhism vary considerably in different countries. This must necessarily happen to all religions that are extensively embraced; because a new faith unavoidably mixes with the previous ideas and customs of nations where it is introduced. Bud-



dhism was peculiarly subject to such admixture; because its teachers, wishing to avoid any coercive measures for the propagation of their religion, invariably adopted into their system all the deities their proselytes had been accustomed to revere. Thus Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, Indra, the Gods of the Mongols, and the Spirits of the Chinese, all found a place in their legends, and were imaged in their temples, though always represented as inferior to Bouddha and his Saints. But though details vary much in different countries, the prominent features of Buddhism are everywhere the same. They all believe in One Invisible Source of Being, sometimes called The Supreme Intelligence, sometimes named The Void. From him emanated all things in the universe, and into him will all things eventually return. Not only this world will be destroyed and renovated, at stated periods, after immense intervals, but even those superior Spheres where happy Spirits dwell, must go through similar revolutions, and all the inhabitants pass into other forms. Whenever this world is created anew, Spirits who have so far wandered from the Supreme as to dwell in the lowest Paradise, will be sent into material bodies, for probationary discipline. Among them will be many who had been previously embodied on the old earth, before it was destroyed. After millions and millions of ages, the time will at last come, when everything in the universe, even the deities themselves, will be merged in the Original Source whence they came. Then new emanations will again commence, followed by new worlds, which will be again destroyed. Nothing is exempted from this perpetual, ever-revolving change, except those souls who, through perfect holiness, have become absorbed into the Supreme Being, and have thus become One with Him. Bouddha is said to have appeared four times, in worlds preceding this; and always with the benevolent purpose of withdrawing Spirits from the vortex of illusions, in which they were involved by their immersion in Matter. Into this present world he descended in the form of Bouddha Sakia. His mother was a beautiful and holy virgin, be-

trothed to a king; and his birth was foretold in a miraculous dream. The object of his mission was to instruct those who were straying from the right path, expiate the sins of mortals by his own sufferings, and procure for them a happy entrance into another existence, by obedience to his precepts and prayers in his name. They always speak of him as one with God from all eternity. They describe him as "one substance, and three images." His most common title is "The Saviour of the World." As he has repeatedly assumed a human form, to facilitate the reunion of men with his own Universal Soul, so they believe that there always will be incarnations of his Spirit. Chinese Sacred Books predict the coming of a new Fo in the latter days, whose mission it will be to restore the world to order and happiness.

They all believe in the pre-existence of souls. The forms they take are merely transient apparent images; as metal may be moulded into the form of a lion, then dissolved into a mass of metal again, then be remoulded into the form of a man or a god. They never say a man is dead; they always say "his soul has emigrated." The connection of the soul with matter they consider an evil and a punishment; therefore enjoyment through the senses is incompatible with holiness, and it is necessary to despise the body and the outward world, in order to become saints. There are regions of Paradise, and regions of torment, where souls are rewarded or punished according to the exact amount of their deserts, before they again enter into some mortal form. These heavens and hells, of various degrees, are painted with great luxury of imagination by theologians. The lower the regions, the more unhappy the inhabitants, the more subject to miserable transmigrations. The higher the celestial abodes, the purer the bliss, and the more extended its duration. But even the highest spheres are not exempted from revolutions, consisting of the destruction of old forms, and the creation of new ones; though this will be after intervals so immense, that they seem like eternity.

The most important moral laws are contained in ten precepts in their Sacred Books; the number ten being considered essential. According to the Hindoo custom of arranging everything in threes, they divide moral duties into three classes; those which relate to *actions*, to *words*, and to *thoughts*. The first three commandments relate to actions, the next four to words, and the last three to thoughts, as follows: 1. "Thou shalt not kill, even the smallest creature." 2. "Thou shalt not appropriate to thyself what belongs to another." 3. "Thou shalt not infringe the laws of chastity." 4. "Thou shalt not lie." 5. "Thou shalt not calumniate." 6. "Thou shalt not speak of injuries." 7. "Thou shalt not excite quarrels, by repeating the words of others." 8. "Thou shalt not hate." 9. "Preserve faith in the holy writings." 10. "Believe in immortality."

The ignorant among the Buddhists, as among the Hindoos, attach inherent virtue to the mere words of their Sacred Books. A thief, who concealed himself in the imperial palace, was discovered and seized by the officers. When they stripped him of his clothes, they found every inch of his body covered with texts from the Sacred Books of Fo. He had an idea that no harm could possibly come to him while he was thus covered with holy words.

William von Humboldt says of Buddhism: "What was once a philosophical doctrine and an enlightened benevolent reform of the corruptions of Braminism, has degenerated into a mass of unmeaning practices and empty formulas, or lost itself in a wholly unintelligible mysticism." It must be remembered, however, that in all ages, and among all nations, there are some minds which save themselves, by an inward process, from the lifelessness of the forms they inherit.

Little is known, and still less understood, concerning theological controversies in those distant countries. European activity of mind is not at work there, to unsettle established opinions, but they doubtless bear a general resemblance to the rest of mankind, in diversity of ideas

concerning spiritual problems puzzling to us all. Though firm believers in unalterable necessity, they strive to reconcile it with the free will of man. Some of them rely chiefly on meditation and faith, the inward operations of the mind; others attach more importance to meritorious works and outward ceremonies. In Thibet are two prominent sects, distinguished by their head-dresses. Those who consider it allowable for the religious to marry, wear red caps. The advocates of strict celibacy, who are much more numerous, wear yellow caps. On what other points their opinions differ is not well understood by foreigners. From time to time, they have been troubled with heretical sects, whose teachers assumed the yellow robe of the priesthood without the sanction of ecclesiastical authorities; and Councils have been called to purify orthodox Buddhism from their alleged impieties.

Buddhists of all sects have always abominated bloody sacrifices, and they carry tenderness toward animals to an extreme degree. Their doctrines likewise induce a charitable disposition toward men. Believing transmigrations of the soul to be regulated by laws of inherent necessity, the religious among them feel for sinners more compassion than contempt or hatred; for they consider moral evil as much a misfortune as a crime. One of their common maxims is that "the preceding births, and the actions committed in those previous existences, are destiny." This tendency to fatality checks all energy and enterprise, and does much to produce the drowsy apathy which characterizes Asiatic countries.

European writers have brought against Buddhists the general charge of atheism. This apparently arises from the fact that their founder named the Source of Being the Infinite Void; from extreme unwillingness to ascribe any form, or any passions, to the Deity. When dying, he is said to have declared to his disciples, as a secret doctrine, unsuited to the populace, that, in the course of revolving ages, all things in the universe, even the gods themselves, would return into The Void, to be reproduced again in new



forms. This repetition of the astronomical theory of the ancient Bramins has led to the idea that he and his followers were atheists. There is said to be a sect among them called Karnikas, who ascribe consciousness and moral activity to the First Principle, and believe that creation resulted from the exercise of his will, not from laws of inherent necessity.

There is much contradiction among writers concerning the date of the Buddhist religion. This confusion arises from the fact that there are several Bouddhas, objects of worship; because the word is not a name, but a title, signifying an extraordinary degree of holiness. Those who have examined the subject most deeply have generally agreed that Bouddha Sakia, from whom the religion takes its name, must have been a real historical personage, who appeared more than a thousand years before Christ. There are many things to confirm this supposition. In some portions of India, his religion appears to have flourished for a long time side by side with that of the Bramins. This is shown by the existence of many ancient temples, some of them cut in subterranean rock, with an immensity of labour, which it must have required a long period to accomplish. In those old temples, his statues represent him with hair knotted all over his head, which was a very ancient custom with the anchorites of Hindostan, before the practice of shaving the head was introduced among their devotees. His religion is also mentioned in one of the very ancient epic poems of India. The severity of the persecution indicates that their numbers and influence had become formidable to the Bramins, who had everything to fear from a sect which abolished hereditary priesthood, and allowed the holy of all castes to become teachers.

Buddhism spread through foreign countries with such rapidity, that it came to be generally designated as "the religion of the Vanquisher," although it was uniformly peaceful in its progress. For the same reason, the Banyan Tree, of rapid and interminable growth, was chosen as its emblem. Marvellous stories are told of the Banyan Tree under which Bouddha Sakia, as a holy anchorite, attained

to complete union with the Supreme Soul. Shoots taken from it were said to send forth roots instantly, and to confirm the faith of the doubtful by ascending into the air, and floating among the clouds, surrounded by a brilliant halo.

Buddhism was introduced into Japan five or six hundred years after Christ. The Japan Encyclopedia enumerates thirty-three ancient patriarchs, or leaders of this religion, the first of whom received the doctrines and writings from Bouddha himself. These men devoted themselves to fasting, prayer, and constant meditation. Several of them burned themselves to death, that the soul might be released from imprisonment in the body, and through the intense purification of fire pass into a happier state of existence. Pictures and images of these patriarchs abound in the temples, and are held in religious veneration.

It is said that eighty thousand followers of Bouddha went forth from Hindostan, as missionaries to other lands; and the traditions of various countries are full of legends concerning their benevolence, holiness, and miraculous power. His religion has never been propagated by the sword. It has been effected entirely by the influence of peaceable and persevering devotees. It now prevails in China, Japan, Thibet, Siam, the Birman Empire, Ceylon, and a large portion of Tartary. The era of the Siamese is the death of Bouddha. In Ceylon, they date from the introduction of his religion into their island. It is supposed to be more extensively adopted than any religion that ever existed. Its votaries are computed at four hundred millions; more than one-third of the whole human race.

Pilgrims from all these countries visit Benares, and other holy cities of India, which they all revere as the fountain-head of their Religion. They speak of it as "The Kingdom of Virtues," "The Exceeding Pure Region," "The Sacred Land."

## CHALDEA AND PERSIA.

'Chaldean shepherds, ranging trackless fields,  
 Looked on the Polar Star, as on a guide  
 And guardian of their course, that never closed  
 His steadfast eye. The Planetary Five  
 With a submissive reverence they beheld;  
 Watched from the centre of their sleeping flocks  
 Those radiant Mercuries, that seemed to move,  
 Carrying through ether, in perpetual round,  
 Decrees and resolutions of the Gods;  
 And, by their aspects, signifying works  
 Of dim futurity, to man revealed."

"The Persian, zealous to reject  
 Altar and image, and the inclusive walls  
 And roofs of temples built by human hands,  
 Presented sacrifice to Moon and Stars,  
 And the whole Circle of the Heavens; for him  
 A sensitive Existence and a God."

WORDSWORTH.

EGYPTIANS affirmed that Chaldea was settled by a colony from their country; but many learned men believe that Egypt was younger than Chaldea, and settled by emigrants from thence. It is a matter of mere conjecture, for Chaldean literature is all destroyed, and their famous capital, Babylon, being mostly built of bricks and bitumen, has left no vestiges by which to reckon historical dates. When Alexander the Great conquered the city, Chaldean priests boasted to the Greek philosophers, who followed his army, that they had continued their astronomical calculations through a period of more than forty thousand years. The earliest records actually found by the Greeks extended back two thousand two hundred and thirty-four years before the Christian era; only one hundred and fourteen years after our commonly received epoch of the Flood.

The great antiquity of Chaldea cannot be doubted, and its intimate connection with Hindostan, or Egypt, is abundantly proved by the little that is known concerning its religion, and by the few fragments that remain of its former grandeur. The ruins of Nineveh have lately been excavated, after having lain concealed from the eye of man for two thousand five hundred years. Obelisks, and gigantic sphinxes have thus been brought to light, and images of the sacred bull, often represented winged and with a human head. The sun, moon, and trident of Siva were found over the entrances of temples, the same as in Hindostan. Hieroglyphics were cut on the monuments, and the sculptures were painted blue, red, and yellow, the brightness of which faded when exposed to the air, after their long interment. The triangular harp of Egypt is represented, and so is the Tree of Life, which both in Egypt and Hindostan was believed to confer immortality on those who ate of its fruit. The attitude of adoration, standing with uplifted hands, is the same as in Egypt. Deities are represented with the heads of birds, and carry lotus-blossoms in their hands, or rings to represent completed cycles. The bull, the ram, the lion, the goat, the seven planets, and other astronomical emblems, occur everywhere. One of their deities is represented with four wings, each terminating in a star. An orb with wings is conspicuous among their sacred emblems, and strongly resembles the winged globe of the Egyptians, the symbol of Osiris. Diodorus, the historian, says Chaldeans called the planets by the very same names which Greeks used to designate them, and Greeks borrowed their names from the Egyptians. The sexual emblem, so common in Egypt and Hindostan, has not been found on the ruins of Nineveh.

Chaldeans believed in One Supreme Being, and a multitude of subordinate deities emanating from him, in successive gradations. Spirits that were nearer the Divine Source were clothed with more ethereal forms than those more remote. The human soul was a portion of God, and originally had wings, which having perished, must



be reproduced before it could return to its source. The stars were Spirits, and had an influence, beneficent or malignant, on the affairs of the world; and wise men, by observing certain rules, could discover the secrets they revealed. They believed the world was created in six successive periods, and was alternately destroyed and renewed in the course of revolving ages. Whenever all the planets met in the sign of Capricorn the whole earth was overwhelmed with a deluge of water, and whenever they all met in Cancer it was consumed by fire.

There was a powerful order of priests, who conducted the ceremonies of religion, explained the laws, practised medicine, interpreted dreams, and averted evils by magical rites. A class of them were set apart on purpose to observe the heavenly bodies and keep record of their changes. The chief use made of this knowledge was to foretell weather and predict future events. These prophets became so celebrated that for many centuries all astrologers were known by the general name of Chaldeans. They were believed to be acquainted with spells that could command Spirits, and induce them to reveal supernatural virtues existing in herbs and stones. These laws of magic were deemed so important that the kings of Chaldea and Persia were instructed therein as a valuable instrument of government. It was supposed that the forces of an enemy might be routed, and a whole army struck with sudden panic, by the due performance of prescribed ceremonies and invocations. The priests had secret doctrines and religious mysteries, which they transmitted from father to son, and carefully veiled from the populace, who worshipped sun, moon, and stars, not as emblems, but as real deities.

The idea that heavenly luminaries were inhabited by Spirits, of a nature intermediate between God and men, first led mortals to address prayers to the orbs over which they were supposed to preside. In order to supplicate these deities, when sun, moon, and stars were not visible, they made images of them, which the priests consecrated with many ceremonies. Then they pronounced solemn

invocations to draw down the Spirits into the statues provided for their reception. By this process it was supposed that a mysterious connection was established between the Spirit and the image, so that prayers addressed to one were thenceforth heard by the other. This was probably the origin of image worship everywhere.

The highest deity among the Chaldeans was called Bel, or Baal, which signifies Lord, or Prince, of the Heavenly Luminaries. The symbol sacred to him was a circle with wings, probably to represent the disc of the Sun and the Spirit presiding over that resplendent orb. Some have supposed that Belus, a beneficent ruler, who improved agriculture, united rivers by canals, and fortified Babylon with walls, was believed to be an avatar, or incarnation of this deity, and therefore received his name. Animals were sacrificed to Bel, and probably human beings also. Queen Semiramis erected a temple for his worship at Babylon, which on account of its great height was used to observe the stars. Herodotus says it was ascended by steps on the outside, from the ground to the highest point of the tower. At the top was a chapel, containing a table of solid gold, and a couch magnificently adorned, where Bel was said to sleep. A priestess resided there, whom the priests affirmed to have been selected by the god himself to attend upon him, because she was more beautiful than any other woman in the nation. This famous temple is reported to have contained three golden statues. One of Bel, forty feet high; another of a goddess supposed to have been a symbol of Nature, recipient and preserver of the life-giving principle of the world. She sat in a golden chair, with two lions by her side, and two huge silver serpents at her feet. Another goddess represented the planet which we call Venus, and was supposed to preside over generation. Her forehead was surmounted by a star, she held in her right hand a serpent, in her left, a sceptre adorned with gems. Syrians worshipped her under the name of Astarte, and it is supposed she is alluded to in Hebrew Scriptures as "The Queen of Heaven." It is said every woman in

Babylon was obliged to offer her person for sale one day in the year, at the temple of this goddess, and give the money thus obtained to defray the expenses of her worship. In Syria, every woman was required to conform to the same custom, or in lieu thereof cut off all her hair as an offering to Astarte. We have no description of the religious festivals of the Chaldeans, but from the great wealth of Babylon, and the expense so lavishly bestowed on sacred edifices, we may reasonably infer that their religious anniversaries were observed with pompous processions and splendid pageantry. In autumn they had a harvest festival of five days, during which time masters everywhere exchanged places with their servants, one of whom presided over the household in royal robes. When Babylon was conquered by the Persians, under Cyrus the Great, the magnificent temple of Bel was robbed of its treasures in gold, silver and gems.

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PERSIA, though ancient to us, was a modern nation compared with Hindostan, Egypt, or Chaldea. When Babylon was in its glory, Persia was inhabited by rude tribes, who had no place in history till the time of Cyrus the Great. It was originally called Iran, which means the Land of Light. Herodotus informs us that their religious ceremonies were conducted with great simplicity. They had neither temples nor altars, and considered it impious to make images of Divine Beings. They ascended mountains, and offered sacrifices, hymns, and prayers to the whole expanse of the Firmament; or rather to the Deity, the Centre and Source of Universal Light, whom they supposed to reside there. They likewise worshipped sun, moon, fire, air, earth, and water.

Concerning their great religious teacher Zerdusht, or Zoroaster, the most confused and contradictory accounts are given. Aristotle, Pliny, and others, fix his date five thousand years before the Trojan war, which would be more than six thousand years before the Christian era; and Plato mentions this as the most common opinion.

Plutarch and others say he flourished only five hundred years before the Trojan war. The Persians themselves had a tradition that he came from some country to the east of them, and they believed him to have been more ancient than the date we assign to Moses. That he was a foreigner is indicated by a passage in the Zendavesta, which represents Ormuzd as saying to him, "Up! and go into the Land of Iran." The confusion in chronology has led some scholars to suggest that there might have been two celebrated sages, who bore the same name; one very ancient, and the other, who was the great reformer of the old religion of Persia, not dating much farther back than the time of Cyrus the Great, who lived five hundred and fifty-nine years before Christ. The learned Heeren thinks it is satisfactorily proved by internal evidence from Zoroaster's own writings, that he lived at "a period anterior to the very commencement of the Median empire, ascending beyond the eighth century before the Christian era." He adds: "Whether we must refer him to a still more ancient epoch, must remain a question." One thing is certain; there was a man called Zoroaster, whom all Asiatic writers agree in representing as eminent for wisdom, particularly for knowledge of astronomy. The religion which bore his name is well known to have prevailed throughout Persia in the time of Socrates; and of the Sacred Books ascribed to him mutilated copies still remain.

Tradition reports that his mother had alarming dreams of Evil Spirits seeking to destroy the child to whom she was about to give birth. But a good Spirit came to rescue him, and said to her: "Fear nothing! Ormuzd will protect this infant. He has sent him as a prophet to the people. The world is waiting for him." When he was born, wicked Spirits threw him into a flaming fire; but his mother found him sleeping sweetly there, as if it were a pleasant bath. It is said that he lived twenty years in the wilderness, on cheese that never grew stale. Then he retired to a solitary mountain, and devoted himself to silent contemplation, in order to attain perfect holiness. One



day, fire from heaven descended visibly upon this mountain, and the king of Persia, attended by his court, approached to worship the sacred flame. Zoroaster came down through the fire unharmed, bringing with him a Book of Laws, which he said had been revealed to him on the mountain, by Ormuzd himself. They called this the Zend-Avesta, which signifies the Living Word. They believed it to be a portion of the Primeval Word, by which creation was produced, and that every syllable it contained possessed an inherent virtue. When sacrifices were offered, it was not allowable to omit or transpose a single word. If priests should fail to perform the ritual, or to recite the prayers therein prescribed, they supposed the order of the universe would be disturbed, and all things fall into confusion. It was written in the Zend language, a dialect of the Sanscrit, the knowledge of which is supposed to have been confined to priests. After the promulgation of these holy laws, it is related that Zoroaster did not converse indiscriminately with all men, but only with those capable of understanding divine things. He held fire in his hand, and allowed melted lead to be poured into his bosom; but nothing could do him any harm. Concerning his death, they affirm that he invoked the Spirit of the constellation of Orion, praying to be consumed by celestial fire; and that he ascended to heaven on a thunderbolt. The tradition obviously implies that he died by lightning. The Persians considered him a divine messenger sent to redeem men from their evil ways, and they always worshipped his memory. To this day, his followers mention him with the greatest reverence; calling him "The Immortal Zoroaster," "The Blessed Zoroaster," "The Living Star." Priests often precede their ceremonies with these words: "O Just Judge, there is but one Zoroaster; that is certain; that is beyond doubt. The law, excellent, right, and just, which Ormuzd has given to his people, is certainly, and without doubt, that which Zoroaster has brought."

He taught the existence of One Supreme Essence, invisible and incomprehensible, named Zeruâné Akeréué, which

signifies Unlimited Time, or The Eternal. From him emanated Primeval Light; from which sprung Ormuzd, the King of Light. He was God of the Firmament, and the Principle of Goodness and of Truth. He was called "The Eternal Source of Sunshine and Light," "The Centre of all that exists," "The First Born of the Eternal One," "The Creator," "The Sovereign Intelligence," "The All-Seeing," "The Just Judge." He was described as "sitting on the throne of the good and the perfect, in regions of pure light," crowned with rays, and with a ring on his finger; a circle being the emblem of infinity; sometimes as a venerable, majestic man, seated on a Bull, their emblem of creation. He pronounced the Primeval Word, *Enohe verihe!* Be it! and his own abode of celestial light sprang into existence, as far removed from the sun, as the sun is from the earth. He then created six resplendent Spirits, masculine and feminine, called Amshaspands, The Immortal Holy Ones, of whom himself was the seventh and highest. These deities of benevolence and wisdom surround the throne of Ormuzd, and convey to him the prayers of inferior spirits, and of men, for whom they are models of purity and perfection. The next series of creation were twenty-eight gentle and kindly Spirits, masculine and feminine, called Izeds, the chief of whom was the radiant Mithras. They presided over sun, moon, and stars, showered beneficent gifts upon the earth, endeavoured to protect it from evil influences, and served as messengers between men and the Superior Spirits. The third order of Spirits, called Fervers, were infinitely more numerous; for they were the ideas, which Ormuzd conceived, before he proceeded to the creation of the world. Hence they were the archetypes of every thing that existed, the vivifying principles which animated all things in the universe, and the guardians of stars, men, animals, plants, and all other created things. Every mortal had one of these Spirits by his side through life, to protect him from evil. Even Ormuzd himself was supposed to have his attendant Ferver.

Khor, the Sun, was called "The Eye of Ormuzd." He

is described as riding in a chariot with four horses, and finishing his course round the earth in three hundred and sixty-five days. A trumpet always sounded from the royal pavilion at the moment the sun rose; and over the entrance was a brilliant image of the sun, enclosed in crystal. Mithras, described as "the Spirit, or Ferver, who attends the Sun in his course," was an object of almost universal worship throughout Persia. He was at first always invoked with the Sun, and in later times they were confounded together. He was called, "The most exalted of the Izeds, the never-sleeping, the protector of the land." He is described as having a thousand ears, and ten thousand eyes. He was not merely the Spirit of Light, but also of Intelligence. Prayers were often addressed to him as "The Mediator," because he was supposed to mediate between the conflicting powers of good and evil. Like Osiris of Egypt, he was the god of fertility and beneficence; like him, he was described with the orb of the sun on his head, and a circle with wings was his symbol. Mithra, a feminine Ized, was his companion.

The universe was intrusted to a chain of spiritual agencies, ascending from the smallest terrestrial thing up to the throne of the Eternal One. Minerals, plants, insects, birds, quadrupeds, fire, air, earth, and water, had each a presiding Spirit. Twelve genii of the zodiac ruled over the months, and thirty subordinate ones over each day of the month. All the heavenly luminaries were animated with Souls, of higher and higher intelligence, and more and more ethereal forms. Everything in the orbs over which they presided partook of their character and state, whether more or less excellent. "Stars with tails" (comets) were under the care of sun, moon, and fixed stars, who kept them within prescribed limits. Sirius, or the Dog Star, so sacred in Egypt as the Star of Isis, was appointed to guide all the others. A Persian poet says: "God conferred sovereignty on the Sun, and squadrons of Stars were his army."

The Spirits of the Stars were benevolent guardians of men, and of all inferior creatures. They were endowed

with intelligence superior to the Spirit of our Earth. Their vision extended through the universe. They knew what would happen in the future, and could reveal it to those who understood their signs. The destinies of men were intimately connected with their motions, and therefore it was important to know under the influence of what star a human soul made its advent into this world. Astrologers swarmed in the palace of the king, and were consulted on all important occasions. Persians held the stars in such affectionate reverence that whenever they looked at one they kissed their hand to it.

In Hindostan the destroying principle and the reproducing were united in the same deity. In Egypt the destructive and beneficent god were twin brothers. In Persia, Ormuzd, the King of Light, and Arimanes, the Prince of Darkness, both emanated from The Eternal One. Arimanes, the second emanation, became jealous of the First Born. In consequence of his manifestations of pride and envy, the Eternal One condemned him to remain three thousand years in the dark realm of shadows, where no ray of light could penetrate. During this time, Ormuzd made the firmament, the heavenly orbs, and Celestial Spirits, without his being aware of it. But when the period of his banishment had expired, he approached the light, and its dazzling beauty renewed his old feelings of envy. He resolved to compete with Ormuzd in everything. He created seven Spirits called Archdevs, in opposition to the Amshaspands, and attached them to the seven planets, to paralyze their efforts for good, and substitute evil. Then he made twenty-eight Spirits called Devs, to counteract the Izeds, by spreading all manner of disorder and distress. The most powerful and pernicious of these was an impure Serpent with two feet, named Aschmogh. Then he produced a crowd of genii to oppose the beneficent operations of the Fervers, so that everything had an attendant bad Spirit, as well as a good one.

Ormuzd, to arrest the increase of evil, made an egg containing kindly Spirits; but Arimanes made one containing



an equal number of Spirits of hatred; then he broke the eggs together, and good and evil became mixed in the new creation.

Ormuzd created the material world in six successive periods. He first spread out the firmament, with its orbs of light; second, he created water; third, earth; fourth, trees; fifth, animals; sixth, man. When all was finished he devoted a seventh period to a festival with the good Spirits. Arimanes assisted in the creation of the earth and the water, because the King of Shadows could not be excluded from those deep opaque elements. Ormuzd, by his will and his word, created a Bull, the symbol of all Life upon the earth. Arimanes slew him, but drops from his body falling into the ground afterward produced various animals and plants. When the elementary particles of his body had been purified in the light of the sun forty years, they became the germ of the Ribas tree, consisting of two closely intertwined stems. Into these Ormuzd infused the breath of life, and they became the first man and the first woman, named Meshia and Meshiane. Celestial happiness was intended for them, if they obeyed the laws of Ormuzd with humility, did not invoke Evil Spirits, and kept themselves pure in thought, word, and action. They did so in the beginning. They said to each other: "It is Ormuzd who has given us the sun, moon, stars, water, earth, trees, and animals. All cometh from a pure root, and beareth pure fruit." But because Ormuzd had made a Guardian Spirit to watch over every human being, Arimanes made an Evil Genius to attend upon and tempt each one through his whole life. These wicked ones slipped into their thoughts, and said: "It is Arimanes who has given the sun, and moon, and all good things." And when they listened to this suggestion, Arimanes cried aloud from his realm of shadows: "O men, worship us!" Then Meshia poured milk toward the North, as a libation to the Spirits of Darkness, and their power was greatly increased thereby. To harass and destroy the good animals, Arimanes made wolves, and tigers, and serpents, and venomous

insects. By eating a certain kind of fruit, he transformed himself into a serpent, and went gliding about on the earth to tempt human beings. His Devs entered the bodies of men and produced all manner of diseases. They entered into their minds, and incited them to sensuality, falsehood, slander and revenge. Into every department of the world they introduced discord and death. When Ormuzd tried to lead men against Arimanes, they deserted him and joined the enemy, thus enabling him to gain the ascendancy on earth and keep it for three thousand years.

The laws of Zoroaster were given to guide men back to true worship. The Zend-Avesta tells us that in view of the accumulation of evil, he cried out in prayer: "O Ormuzd, steeped in brightness, what shall I do, in order to battle successfully with Arimanes, the father of evil? How shall I make men pure and holy?"

Ormuzd answered: "O Zoroaster, invoke Zeruâné Akeréné. Invoke the Amshaspands, who shed abundance throughout the seven planets. Invoke the birds, travelling on high. Invoke the swift wind, the earth, and the heaven. Invoke my Spirit, who am the strongest, wisest, best of beings; who have the most majestic body, who am supreme in purity, whose soul is the excellent Word. All ye people, invoke me, as I have commanded Zoroaster."

"Thou, O Zoroaster, by the promulgation of my Law, shalt restore to me my former glory, which was pure light. Up! haste thee to the Land of Iran, which thirsteth after the Law, and say, thus sayeth Ormuzd: 'Thou, O Iran, which I created pure, and radiant in brightness, shalt restore to me my ancient glory. Thou shalt utterly uproot all impure thoughts; all kinds of death, all sorcery, all evil shalt thou destroy.'"

The Eternal One had from the beginning limited the duration of time to twelve thousand years. Notwithstanding the activity and beneficence of the Spirits of Light, Arimanes would often have the mastery, especially in the latter time. But pure souls have nothing to fear. The Eternal has decreed the ultimate triumph of good. When

the earth seems most afflicted with evil, he will send prophets to succour the distressed, and reveal to mortals the heavenly light. Finally, the whole world will become converted to the worship of Zoroaster. Men will cease to eat meat, and live on milk and fruit; afterward, they will sustain themselves on water only; at last, they will become so ethereal, that they will take no nourishment whatsoever, and yet not die.

At the appointed time, the Ized Serosch will summon the Holy One to appear, whose mission it is to judge the wicked and the good, and restore the world to its primeval beauty. He will bring all the world to the worship of Zoroaster, and establish universal peace and happiness. At his command, bodies will rise from their graves. Souls will know them, and will say: "That is my father, or my brother, my wife, or my sister." The wicked will say to the good: "Wherefore, when I was in the world, did you not teach me to act righteously? O, ye pure ones, it is because you have not instructed me, that I am excluded from the assembly of the blest."

Each one will be judged according to his works. The good father may have a wicked daughter, and of two sisters, one may be pure and the other impure. The good will weep over the evil, and the evil will weep over themselves. A star with a tail, in the course of its revolutions, will strike the earth, and set it on fire. The fierce heat will make metals run down from high mountains and flow over the earth like rivers. All men must pass through them. To the good they will be like baths of warm milk; to the wicked they will be like torrents of lava. But they will be purified through fire, and come forth excellent and happy. Arimanes and his imps will be driven by Good Spirits through the burning torrents of melted metal, that they may become purified also. Even they will at last feel the overpowering influence of goodness, and will prostrate themselves before Ormuzd, who will accept their repentance and forgive them freely. These redeemed Spirits will join mankind in a universal chorus of praise to the

Eternal Source of light and blessing. Fathers and sons, sisters and friends, will unite to aid each other in good works. They will cast no shadows, all speak one language, and live together in one harmonious society. The level and fruitful earth will be clothed with renovated beauty, and innocence and joy will everywhere prevail. After that, Ormuzd will repose for a while.

Such is the account given in the Sacred Scriptures of the ancient Persians, called the Zend-Avesta. The following is a concise statement of the moral teaching therein contained: "Worship, with humility and reverence, Ormuzd, the giver of blessings, and all the Spirits, to whose care he has intrusted the universe. Men ought reverently to salute the Sun, and praise him, but not pay him religious worship."

"Obey strictly all the laws given to Zoroaster."

"Kings are animated by a more ethereal fire than other mortals; such fire as exists in the upper spheres. Ormuzd established the king to nourish and solace the poor. He is to his people what Ormuzd is to this earth. It is the duty of subjects to obey him implicitly."

"It is the duty of children to obey their parents; for wives to obey their husbands."

"Treat old age with great reverence and tenderness."

"Multiply the human species, and increase its happiness."

"Cultivate the soil, drain marshes, and destroy dangerous creatures. He who sows the ground with diligence acquires a greater stock of religious merit than he could gain by ten thousand prayers in idleness."

"Multiply domestic animals, nourish them, and treat them gently."

"Warriors, who defend the right, deserve praise."

"Do not allow thyself to be carried away by anger. Angry words, and scornful looks, are sins. To strike a man, or vex him with words, is a sin. Even the intention to strike another, merits punishment. Opposition to peace is a sin. Reply to thine enemy with gentleness."

"Avoid everything calculated to injure others. Have



no companionship with a man who injures his neighbour."

"Take not that which belongs to another."

"Be not envious, avaricious, proud, or vain. Envy and jealousy are the work of Evil Spirits. Haughty thoughts and thirst of gold are sins."

"To refuse hospitality, and not to succour the poor, are sins."

"Obstinacy in maintaining a lie is a sin. Be very scrupulous to observe the truth in all things."

"Abstain from thy neighbour's wife. Fornication and immodest looks are sins. Avoid licentiousness, because it is one of the readiest means to give Evil Spirits power over body and soul. Strive, therefore, to keep pure in body and mind, and thus prevent the entrance of Evil Spirits, who are always trying to gain possession of man. To think evil is a sin."

"Contend constantly against evil, morally and physically, internally and externally. Strive in every way to diminish the power of Arimanes and destroy his works. If a man has done this, he may fearlessly meet death; well assured that radiant Izeds will lead him across the luminous bridge, into a paradise of eternal happiness. But though he has been brave in battle, killed wild beasts, and fought with all manner of external evils, if he has neglected to combat evil within himself, he has reason to fear that Arimanes and his Devs will seize him, and carry him to Duzakh, (hell,) where he will be punished according to his sins; not to satisfy the vengeance of Ormuzd, but because having connected himself with evil, this is the only means of becoming purified therefrom, so as to be capable of enjoying happiness at a future period."

"Every man who is pure in thoughts, words, and actions, will go to the celestial regions. Every man who is evil in thoughts, words, or actions, will go to the place of the wicked."

"All good thoughts, words, or actions, are the productions of the celestial world."

There is a work called *The Sadder*, written for popular

use, by a Magus, much later than Zoroaster. As usual with all religions as they grow older, there is a departure from primitive simplicity. This book contains few moral precepts, and directions for innumerable ceremonies, accompanied with unconditional obedience to priests. It declares: "Though your good works exceed in number the leaves, the drops of rain, the stars in the sky, or the sands on the sea-shore, they will be unprofitable to you, unless they are accepted by the priests. To obtain the acceptation of these guides to salvation, you must faithfully pay them tithes of all you possess; of your goods, of your lands, and of your money. If the priests be satisfied, your soul will escape hell-tortures; you will secure praise in this world, and happiness in the next. For the teachers of religion know all things, and can deliver all men." This book represents Arimanes as being annihilated, instead of restored.

A large portion of the Zend-Avesta is filled with prayers, of which the following are samples: "I address my prayer to Ormuzd, Creator of all things; who always has been, who is, and who will be forever; who is wise and powerful; who made the great arch of heaven, the sun, moon, stars, winds, clouds, water, earth, fire, trees, animals, metals, and men; whom Zoroaster adored. Zoroaster, who brought to the world knowledge of the law; who knew by natural intelligence, and by the ear, what ought to be done, all that has been, all that is, and all that will be; the science of sciences, the excellent Word, by which souls pass the luminous and radiant bridge, separate themselves from the evil regions, and go to light and holy dwellings, full of fragrance. O Creator, I obey thy laws. I think, act, speak, according to thy orders. I separate myself from all sin. I do good works according to my power. I adore thee with purity of thought, word, and action. I pray to Ormuzd, who recompenses good works, who delivers unto the end all those who obey his laws. Grant that I may arrive at Paradise, where all is fragrance, light, and happiness."

"O Ormuzd, pardon the repentant sinner. As I, when a man irritates me by his thoughts, words, or actions, carried away, or not carried away, by his passions, if he humbles himself before me, and addresses to me his prayer, I become his friend."

"Grant, O Ormuzd, that my good works may exceed my sins. Give me a part in all good actions and all holy words."

"I pray to Mithras, who has a thousand ears and ten thousand eyes; who never sleeps, who is always watchful and attentive, who renders barren lands fertile."

"Thou Fire, son of Ormuzd, brilliant and beneficent, given by Ormuzd, be favourable to me."

"I pray to the New Moon, holy, pure, and great. I pray to the Full Moon, holy, pure, and great. I gaze at the Moon which is on high, I honour the light of the Moon. The Moon is a blessed Spirit created by Ormuzd, to bestow light and glory on the earth."

"I invoke the Source of Waters, holy, pure, and great, coming from the throne of Ormuzd, from the high mountain, holy, pure, and great."

"I invoke the sweet Earth. I invoke the Mountains, abode of happiness, given by Ormuzd, holy, pure, and great."

The Word spoken by Ormuzd, through whose agency creation was produced, was called Honover, and invoked as the Great Primal Spirit.

In all their prayers and religious ceremonies, it was customary to turn towards the sun. When they invoked the stars, the elements, or any visible objects, they affirmed that their worship was not directed to them, but to the Spirits residing in them, whom they were bound to revere as the benevolent creations of Ormuzd. In his name all their prayers and ceremonies began and ended. Of all places on earth, mountains were considered most holy. Rivers were sacred, and they never allowed them to be polluted by blood, or anything unclean. The Euphrates, which annually overflows and fertilizes the country, they

regarded with especial reverence, and paid homage to it, as Egyptians did to the Nile. All good men, useful animals, salutary plants, and luminous objects, belonged to Ormuzd. All wicked, ferocious, poisonous things, and all dark places, belonged to Arimanes. They expressed their detestation of this Evil One in all manner of ways. When they had occasion to write his name, they always wrote it backward, and turned the letters upside down. They considered a dragon the representative of him. They sometimes sacrificed to him and his Spirits, in order to pacify their rage, avert dangers, or procure injury to enemies; but it was not lawful to eat the meat of animals thus sacrificed. When Xerxes prayed that it might be put into the minds of nations at enmity with Persia to drive away their best and bravest men, as the Athenians had exiled Themistocles, he addressed the prayer to Arimanes, not to Ormuzd. For oblations to Evil Spirits, they pounded plants that grew in deeply-shaded places, mixed them with the blood of a wolf, and threw it into some dark hole where the sun never shone.

Persian priests were called Magi. At first they were few in number, but afterward became numerous and powerful. The Archimagus, or High Priest, was revered as the visible head of the church, and the lawful successor of Zoroaster. He resided at Balch, which was regarded as a holy city. They said the identical fire from heaven, brought by Zoroaster himself from the flaming mountain, where he received the sacred Book of Laws, was there preserved in the temple. Grand solemnities and religious festivals were celebrated there, and it was deemed an indispensable duty for every man to make a pilgrimage thither at least once in his life. Each district had a superintending priest, who ranked next to the High Priest. A third class performed the common offices of worship in towns and villages. A large tract of the most fertile land was appropriated to the Magi; and citizens were required to give a tenth of their income for their support, and the expenses attending religious ceremonies. Kings could not



enter upon the duties of their royal office till they had been enrolled among the Magi, and instructed in their mysteries. They had sole charge of the public records, and the education of youth. No other persons were allowed to explain the Sacred Books, or perform religious ceremonies. A class of them were Prophets. When they prophesied, they said the air was full of visions, which infused themselves subtly into their eyes. It was believed they could predict weather, and foretell future events from the aspect of the stars; that, by certain ceremonies and holy words, they could cast Evil Spirits out of the diseased; and recite spells that would impart supernatural virtue to stones, plants, and scraps of writing. In the later times, kings sometimes caused them to be put to death for misinterpreting dreams and uttering false prophecies.

The Magi were required to be of good moral character, in sound health, and free from any personal deformity. Hindoo and Egyptian priests considered it necessary, in order to preserve their sanctity, never to come in contact with blood, except that of animals slain for sacrifice; but Persian priests were not considered polluted by killing anything, except a human being, or a dog. In primitive times they were very simple in their habits. They dressed in plain white robes, and wore no ornaments. They slept on the ground, and lived on bread, cheese, fruit, and vegetables. Afterward, when people brought animals to be sacrificed to the gods, the priests were accustomed to feast upon the flesh; it being their doctrine that the soul of the animal was the part most appropriate to deities. It was unlawful to touch the sacrifice, or approach the altar, till they had poured upon it consecrated liquors, and repeated prescribed words.

They worshipped Fire with peculiar reverence, because they thought it represented, though imperfectly, the original fire from Ormuzd, the vital principle of life and motion; also, because it was the most purifying of all things. They never allowed dead bodies to be burned; that being considered a pollution of the sacred element. A fire was kept

continually burning on all their altars. It was originally kindled in the temple at Balch, at the sacred flame brought from the burning mountain by Zoroaster himself; and it was never after allowed to go out. The Magi watched it alternately, night and day. They fed it with fragrant sandal-wood, first stripped of its bark, to ascertain that it was perfectly clean and free from insects. Sometimes they threw in garlands as an offering, and if the fire languished, they poured on consecrated aromatic oil, accompanying the ceremony with prayers and music of the double flute. When the king went forth to battle, the Magi carried a portion of the Sacred Fire, on silver censers, in front of the army. Whoever cast any dirt into it, or blowed upon it with his breath, was put to death, because breath, coming from the interior of the body, was deemed impure.

They consecrated vegetables, fruit and flowers, and offered them in very clean places, as oblations to the souls of departed ancestors. Animals for sacrifice were crowned with garlands. To Mithras they sacrificed beautiful white horses, richly caparisoned, because that free and vigorous animal was considered an appropriate emblem of the sun. They buried human beings alive, as an offering to a deity whom they supposed to exist under the earth. Herodotus speaks of nine youths and nine virgins thus sacrificed, and he says it was a common custom in Persia.

They had religious festivals of gratitude for spring time and harvest. Every year, during one of these festivals, kings and princes set aside their pomp and mingled freely with the humblest of their subjects. They received all petitions, and inquired personally into the grievances of the poor. Before they sat down to feast, the monarch was accustomed to say: "From your labours we receive subsistence, and you are protected by our vigilance. Since, therefore, we are mutually necessary to each other, let us live together like brothers, in concord and love." Individuals frequently employed the priests to offer sacrifices or oblations, on birth-days, or the anniversaries of deceased ancestors, or other occasions connected with their own in-

terests or affections, but no man was allowed to sacrifice or pray for himself, or his own family alone; he was required to include the whole nation in his supplications. One of their festivals was called The Destruction of Evils, because during its observance the Magi destroyed ferocious beasts, venomous reptiles, and poisonous plants; reciting, meanwhile, many formulas to expel Evil Spirits.

Their most splendid ceremonies were in honor of Mithras, called the Mediator. They kept his birth-day, with many rejoicings, on the twenty-fifth of December, when the sun perceptibly begins to return northward, after his long winter journey; and they had another festival at the vernal equinox. Perhaps no religious festival was ever more splendid than the annual Salutation of Mithras, during which forty days were set apart for thanksgiving and sacrifice. The procession to salute the god formed long before the rising of the sun. The High Priest was followed by a long train of the Magi, in spotless white robes, chanting hymns, and carrying the Sacred Fire on silver censers. Then came three hundred and sixty-five youths in scarlet, to represent the days of the year, and the colour of fire. These were followed by the Chariot of the Sun, empty, decorated with garlands, and drawn by superb white horses harnessed with pure gold. Then came a white horse of magnificent size, his forehead blazing with gems, in honour of Mithras. Close behind him rode the king, in a chariot of ivory inlaid with gold, followed by his royal kindred in embroidered garments, and a long train of nobles riding on camels richly caparisoned. This gorgeous retinue, facing the east, slowly ascended Mount Orontes. Arrived at the summit, the High Priest assumed his tiara wreathed with myrtle, and hailed the first rays of the rising sun with incense and prayer. The other Magi gradually joined him in singing hymns to Ormuzd, the source of all blessing, by whom the radiant Mithras had been sent to gladden the earth and preserve the principle of life. Finally, they all joined in one universal

chorus of praise, while king, princes and nobles prostrated themselves before the orb of day.

Persians did not represent Ormuzd as assisted in the work of creation by a feminine companion, and they disliked descriptions of that kind in other religions. They had likewise great abhorrence of images, and lest they should be introduced from foreign nations, they forbade the exercise of any other worship than that of Zoroaster, under the severest penalties. In the beginning they always worshipped in the open air, from an idea that it was impious to enclose the deity within walls; but, in after times, they erected several temples, and had numerous small oratories for the people to go in and pray, where the Sacred Fire was kept burning only in lamps. Sects sprung up and disputed about the origin of evil, and various other questions, each striving to sustain its creed by texts from the Zend-Avesta. Some maintained that Arimanes was co-eternal with Ormuzd; others affirmed that only light and goodness flowed from the Source of Being, that darkness and evil merely followed them as a shadow does the substance. In the reign of Artaxerxes, divisions of opinion had multiplied into seventy-two sects, beside a class of unbelievers, who ridiculed them all. The king summoned the Magi from all parts of his dominions, to the number of forty thousand. From these four thousand of the worthiest were selected; these were again sifted down to four hundred, to forty, and finally to seven. Among these the pre-eminent for holiness was Erdiviraph. Having performed ablutions and other religious ceremonies, he drank a powerful opiate, was covered with white linen, and laid down to sleep, that he might receive divine revelations in dreams. The king and six nobles watched by him while he slept seven days and nights. When he awoke, he declared what was truly the religion taught by the Zend-Avesta. This was carefully written down by an attendant scribe. The people received it as a divine revelation, believing that his soul had been in heaven and received direct instruction from Ormuzd.



The religion of Persia had always been very uncompromising, and intolerant toward other nations; principally owing to their abhorrence of image-worship. When Cambyzes invaded Egypt, he mutilated the statues of the gods, and insulted the sacred symbols. Babylon having become a province of the Persian empire, by conquest, Xerxes destroyed the images of the gods, and put their priesthood to death. After Artaxerxes restored the national religion, by an express revelation from Ormuzd to the holiest of the Magi, his desire to preserve the national unity led to a very strict exclusion of all other forms of faith. The adoption of foreign gods, so very common among the nations, was strenuously resisted by the Persians. But nevertheless causes were at work to produce gradual changes. The union of the Babylonian empire with the Persian brought in many Chaldean customs and ideas. Mixture with the Greeks, by war and commerce, and the final reduction of Persia to a Roman province, introduced a flood of foreign innovations. Temples were erected, and, notwithstanding their abhorrence of images, the statue of the goddess Astarte was set up and worshipped in many places, under the name of Mithra. In the latter times, an order of priestesses was likewise instituted, vowed to celibacy, and dedicated to the service of Mithras. But notwithstanding these unsettling influences, the greater part of the Persians clung with tenacious affection to the faith of Zoroaster.

When Mahometans conquered Persia, in the seventh century of our era, followers of the old faith passed through very severe sufferings. But at last, when the new power became firmly established, a fragment of them, consisting of about eighty thousand families, were allowed to settle in one of the most barren provinces of Persia, to build a new temple, and worship in their own way. A few are scattered about elsewhere, but they are always obliged to live in suburbs by themselves, and are employed only in the meanest offices. They make many pilgrimages to Mount Elbourz, the residence of their High Priest, whom they

regard as an oracle. Their conquerors contemptuously name them Ghebers, or Giaours, which means infidels, but they call themselves Behendie, signifying followers of the true faith. Europeans generally style them Fire Worshipers; but they say they merely adore fire as the representative of an invisible Spirit, whom they call Yerd. They keep a fire burning in their consecrated places, which they believe was kindled by Zoroaster four thousand years ago. They often build their temples over subterranean fires. Upon their altars, they have spheres to represent the sun. When the sun rises, these orbs light up, and turn round with great noise. The ignorant attribute this to magic. Some of them reside on the shores of the Caspian Sea, about ten miles from a source of perpetual fire, which they hold in great veneration. It issues from the cleft of a rock, and appears like the clear blue flame of burning alcohol. Sometimes it rises several yards; at others, only a few inches above the aperture. It has been burning thus for ages, without intermission, and the rock is neither consumed nor changed in colour. When travellers insert a hollow tube in the ground, for several hundred yards round this rock, a similar fire issues through the tube. Some suppose the story of Zoroaster's burning mountain originated in this, or a similar phenomenon.

Some of his followers, in time of Mahometan persecution, fled eastward to India, told their story, and humbly begged permission to stay. A Hindoo rajah took compassion on them, and allowed them to build a temple for the Sacred Fire, which they had carefully brought with them. They remain there in considerable numbers to this day, under the name of Parsees. They are a poor, harmless people, industrious in their habits, rigorous in morals, and honest in their dealings. They worship but one God, and detest idols. They consider Zoroaster the highest of prophets, but have also great reverence for Abraham, and often call their own faith the religion of Abraham. The Sacred Fire they carried from Persia, more than a thousand years ago, has never been extinguished. They preserve it with the

utmost veneration in their temple at Oodwara. In all their other temples is a sacred flame, lighted from this, and carefully watched by priests, who pray with mouths covered, lest their breath should pollute the holy element. The Parsees never blow out a light, but always extinguish it by a fan, or motions of the hand. Priests spend their whole time reading prayers, chanting hymns, burning incense, and performing prescribed ceremonies. Devotional exercises mingle more or less with almost every action of life, among this simple people. "May my prayer be pleasing to Ormuzd," is the preface to every petition. They have prayers for the new moon, for the fifteenth day of the moon, and for the decline of the moon; but they are especially enjoined to pray often during the growth of the moon. They employ priests to recite many formulas to guard their crops from malign influences; and they themselves utter continual invocations to Spirits of the sun, moon, earth, and waters, to render their harvests abundant. Every day, they pray to the particular Spirit supposed to preside over that day. They wash and recite a prayer before and after eating. They pray when they retire to rest; when they rise in the morning; when they turn in bed, toward a fire, or burning lamp, or moon, or star; when they light a lamp, or see one lighted; when they cut their nails, or their hair; and on many other occasions, which it would hardly be consistent with decorum to mention. They are forbidden to speak while they eat, or while they perform any of the natural functions; because Evil Spirits seek to distract mortals, and insinuate themselves into the body while the senses are busily occupied. When a person sneezes, they consider it a sign that the Evil Spirits, always striving to gain possession of man, are driven out by the interior fire that animates him. Therefore, whenever they hear a sneeze, they say: "Blessed be Ormuzd!" In the chamber where a babe is born, they keep a fire burning continually, because Evil Spirits are afraid to approach that sacred element. Those, who can afford it, keep four priests employed three days and three nights, praying and

performing ceremonies for the temporal and eternal welfare of the child. It is washed three times, with water previously consecrated by various forms of blessing and prayer. Whoever touches the new-born before this ablution, must go through a process of purification. Some parents still consult the priests concerning the aspect of the stars at the birth of their offspring. When a child is frightened, or has a fit, or is troubled with any disease, they obtain from the priests, a spell thus worded, and tie it on his left arm : "In the name of Ormuzd, I bind this fever, and all other evils produced by Arimanes and his wicked Spirits, by magicians, or by Peris. I bind these evils by the power and beauty of fire ; by the power and beauty of the planets and fixed stars." Peris are supposed to be descendants of fallen Spirits, doomed to wander about the earth, and excluded from Paradise, till their penance is accomplished. When a man has a fever, or any other malady, they recite prayers similar to the above, clapping the hands seven times. It is supposed that Evil Spirits enter a lifeless body as soon as the animating fire from Ormuzd has gone out of it. Therefore, whoever touches a corpse, even accidentally, must purify himself by ablutions, prayers, and ceremonies. On stated occasions, they offer oblations of flowers, fruit, rice, wine, and sometimes meat, to the souls of departed ancestors, and employ priests to accompany them with prayers. During the last ten days of the year, they believe the spirits of the dead come to earth and visit their relatives ; therefore they never leave their homes at that season. They have their houses purified by religious ceremonies, and ornamented with garlands for their reception.

Intelligent Ghebers and Parsees acknowledge that the original Zend-Avesta was lost in the course of their various wars and migrations. Scattered fragments were collected and published, and to this day it is regarded with great veneration, as a book from heaven. A copy is kept in every temple, and portions of it are read to the people at stated times. Anquetil du Perron, a zealous Oriental scholar, spent several years among the Parsees, and trans-



lated into French a part of the Zend-Avesta, which was published in 1771. The learned men of Europe generally acknowledge it as the ancient Zend-Avesta and an authentic record of the doctrines of Zoroaster.

The priesthood is not hereditary among the Parsees. The son of the poorest labourer may be educated for the sacred office. But these simple devotional people regard their religious teachers with the utmost veneration. They are considered polluted by the touch of foreigners, or even by men of their own faith. If a physician cures a priest of any dangerous illness, he is considered amply repaid by his prayers, so very efficacious are they deemed. Before reciting a prayer, the priests always wash their hands, saying: "I repent of all my sins. I renounce them." To render their supplications more powerful, they use a formula to unite them with all souls who have ever been pleasing to Ormuzd, or ever will be so, till the day of resurrection. The priest also declares that he takes part in all the good actions of all the just, who have ever lived in the world, and that he joins his actions to theirs. This communion of prayers is everywhere conspicuous in all their ceremonies. The ancient doctrine concerning Arimanes has become modified. They now teach that he was an inferior Spirit, who rebelled against Ormuzd, his Creator. A spirit of benevolence pervades their maxims. Their writings declare "there is no greater crime than to buy grain and keep it till it becomes dear. He who pursues this course, renders himself responsible for all the famine and misery in the world."

Of all known religions, that of the Parsees is the only one in which fasting and celibacy are never enjoined as meritorious, but are, on the contrary, expressly forbidden. They say the power of Arimanes is increased by punishing the body and rendering it feeble and sluggish; that Ormuzd is best pleased when the body is kept fresh and vigorous, as a means of rendering the soul more strong to resist the attacks of evil. They believe that a man in good health and spirits can listen more attentively to the Sacred Word,

and has more courage of heart to perform good works. They consider large families a blessing, and keep all birth-days as holy festivals. They say beneficent genii gave fragrance to flowers, and flavour to fruit, on purpose that man might enjoy them. They take cheerful and benevolent views of death. To the good it is only a passage into Paradise; to the wicked it is the beginning of penances that will finally atone for their sins, and from which the living can help to deliver them by their prayers. When a man commits crimes, it is ordained that relatives and friends should perform pious rites and make donations to the poor, in expiation of his faults, because they believe such observances will diminish his period of punishment.

They have a tradition that a holy personage, named Pashoutan, is waiting in a region called Kanguedez, for a summons from the Ized Serosch, who in the last days will bring him to Persia, to restore the ancient dominion of that country and spread the religion of Zoroaster over the whole earth.

In the northern districts of Kurdistan there is, at this present time, a sect called Yezidis, or Devil-Worshippers, greatly despised by the Mahometans and Christians around them. They are kind and simple people, extremely devout, according to the faith which they believe was delivered to their saints. They have a tradition that they came from the banks of the Euphrates, and their worship indicates a Chaldean or Persian origin. They believe in One Supreme Being, but have a reverential awe of talking about his existence or attributes. They believe Satan was once chief of the angelic host. He is now suffering punishment for his rebellion against the Supreme, but will eventually be restored to his high estate in the celestial hierarchy. He has under his control seven Spirits, who exercise great influence over the affairs of this world. They say it is necessary to conciliate him, because he now has means of doing much evil to mankind, and he will hereafter have power to reward them. When they allude to him, they do it with great reverence; calling him Melek el Kout, the

Mighty Angel. They will not mention his name, or even utter any word which resembles it in sound. It irritates them to hear it spoken by others, and it is said they have put to death some who wantonly persisted in doing it to annoy them. The bronze image of a bird, consecrated to him, is treated with great veneration. The Sheik carries it in all his journeys, and his deputies have small copies of it made in wax. They practise circumcision, and baptize a child in water, if possible, seven days after birth. They consider Abraham and Mahomet great prophets, and believe that Christ was a heavenly Spirit, who took on himself the form of a man, for benevolent purposes. They say he did not die on the cross, but ascended living to heaven, whence he will come a second time on this earth. They have very great reverence for the Hebrew Scriptures, and a lesser degree for the New Testament and the Koran. They practise frequent ablutions, and have great abhorrence of pork. They have a volume in Arabic, containing chants, prayers, and directions for the performance of religious ceremonies. They consider this very sacred, and will not show it to strangers. Their holy day is Wednesday; they do not abstain from work, but some always fast. They have four orders of hereditary priesthood, and, what is very remarkable in Asia, these offices descend to women as well as men, and both are treated with equal reverence. The higher orders of priests generally wear white linen garments, the inferior wear black, or dark brown. Every district has a religious head, called a Sheik. The office is hereditary in his family, but the descendant best qualified by character is chosen to succeed him. An order of priests called Pirs, or Saints, are much revered. Their intercessions for the people are supposed to have great influence, and it is believed that they are invested with power to cure insanity and disease. They are expected to lead a very pure and holy life.

The Yezidis always turn toward the east when they pray, and kiss the first objects touched by the rays of the rising sun. On great festivals they sacrifice white oxen to the

Sun, and distribute the flesh among the poor. They venerate fire, and suffer nothing unclean to be thrown into it. Sheik Adi is their great saint. They have many traditions of his interviews with angels. The valley where he is buried is a place of pilgrimage. Worshippers wash themselves and their garments, and take the shoes from their feet, before they step on the hallowed ground. A yearly sum is paid to priests, who guard the sacred valley from all pollution, keep lamps lighted, and perform the appointed ceremonies. The badge of their office is a girdle of red and yellow, the colours of fire. On the door of the tomb are rudely carved a lion, a serpent, a man, a hatchet, and a comb. The serpent is particularly conspicuous. Balls of clay taken from this tomb are sold as relics, and believed to be very efficacious against diseases and Evil Spirits. A chapter from the Koran is written on the interior walls. Only Sheiks and high priests are permitted to be buried in the vicinity. Near by is a reservoir of water, which they believe the saint brought miraculously from the holy well of Zem Zem, at Mecca. It is carefully guarded from all impurities, and eagerly drank by crowds of pilgrims. A low edifice, with a small white spire, is called the Sanctuary of the Sun. On a slab, near the door, is carved an invocation to the Spirit of the Sun, and it is so built that the first rays of that luminary fall upon it. The interior is continually lighted by lamps, and is considered a very holy place. There are no buildings in all the valley, except those for worship and the dwellings of resident priests. They are kept very pure with repeated coats of whitewash. On the evening of festivals, lamps are placed in all the niches of the walls, and in apertures of the rocky mountains that enclose this sacred valley. They are generally votive offerings from pilgrims, who have prayed to the saint in time of danger or distress, and found relief from his supposed intercessions. As priests walk by carrying these lamps, pilgrims crowd round them, striving to pass their right hands through the flame. They devoutly kiss the hand thus purified, and rub the right eyebrow



with it. They hold out little children to have their right hands purified in the same way. Those who cannot reach the flame, strive to touch the hands of others who are more fortunate. They reverently kiss the very stones blackened by the smoke of these lamps.

On the festival of Sheik Adi, his tomb is visited by long processions of priests in white linen robes, musicians with pipes and tambourines, and pilgrims from all their districts. Peddlers congregate there to sell their wares. Sheiks and priests walk familiarly among the people, or sit talking with them in the shadows of the trees. Seven or eight thousand usually meet together on this occasion, and it is a picturesque sight to see them wandering about among the trees and rocks with their lighted torches. Layard thus describes some of the religious ceremonies he witnessed at this festival: "Thousands of lights danced in the distance, glimmered among the trees, and were reflected in the fountains and streams. Suddenly all voices were hushed. A solemn strain of sweet pathetic music came from the tomb of the saint; the voices of men and women in harmony with flutes. At measured intervals, the song was broken by the loud clash of cymbals and tambourines; and then those without the precincts of the tomb joined in the melody. The same slow and solemn strain, occasionally varied, lasted nearly an hour. Gradually, the chant gave way to a lively melody, ever increasing in quickness. Voices were raised to the highest pitch; women made the rocks resound with their shrill tones; men among the multitude without joined in the cry; tambourines were beaten with extraordinary energy; musicians strained their limbs in violent contortions, till they fell exhausted on the ground. I never heard a more frightful yell than rose in that valley. It was midnight. There were no immodest gestures or unseemly ceremonies. When musicians and singers were exhausted, the sounds died away, groups scattered about the valley, and resumed their previous cheerfulness."

The Yezidis are remarkable for tenacious attachment to their religion. A person of mature age among them never

renounces his faith. They have often been subjected to terrible tortures, but have invariably preferred death to the adoption of any other form of worship. Even when young children are carried off and sold to Turkish harems, they often cherish through life the religion of their childhood, and contrive to keep up a secret communication with their priests.

## GREECE AND ROME.

Man gifted Nature with divinity,  
To lift and link her to the breast of love;  
All things betrayed to the initiate eye  
The tracks of gods above.

Not to that culture gay,  
Stern self-denial, or sharp penance wan.  
Well might each heart be happy in that day;  
For gods, the happy ones, were kin to man.

SCHILLER'S *Gods of Greece*.

GREECE was the oldest European nation. Its history extends a little more than one thousand eight hundred years before Christ; two hundred years earlier than Moses; but they were a rude people at that time, dwelling in huts and caves. Being settled by colonies from Egypt, Phœnicia, Thrace, and other countries, their religious customs and opinions varied considerably in different states; but the general features were similar. They worshipped many deities, all intended to represent the divine energy acting in various departments of the universe. A few enlightened minds among them taught that these all proceeded from One Central Source of Being; and this belief, confused and dim at first, became more distinct as knowledge increased.

Athens was founded by a colony from Egypt, and the intercourse between that country and Greece was always frequent. The effect of this on their religion and philosophy is very obvious. But in the Grecian atmosphere of thought and feeling all things were tinged with more cheerful and poetic colours. Egyptian reverence for stability and power was here changed to worship of freedom

and beauty. Strong, active, and vivacious themselves, the Grecians invested their deities with the same characteristics. They did not conceive of them as dwelling apart in passionless majesty, like Egyptian gods, with a solemn veil of obscurity around them. They were in the midst of things, working, fighting, loving, rivalling, and outwitting each other, just like human beings, from whom they differed mainly in more enlarged powers. No anchorites here preached torture of the body for the good of the soul. How to enjoy the pleasures of life with prudence, and invest it with the greatest degree of beauty, was their morality. In the procession of the nations, Greece always comes bounding before the imagination, like a graceful young man in the early freshness of his vigour; and nothing can wean a poetic mind from the powerful attraction of his immortal beauty.

Gay, imaginative, pliable, and free, the Grecians received religious ideas from every source, and wove them all together in a mythological web of fancy, confused and wavering in its patterns, but full of golden threads. They seem to have copied external rites from Egypt, without troubling themselves to comprehend the symbolical meaning, which priests concealed so carefully. They added ceremonies and legends from other countries, broken into fragments, and mixed together in strange disorder.

They had no Sacred Books, in the usual meaning of the term. Minos, their first lawgiver, was believed to have received his laws directly from Jupiter; and popular veneration invested with a certain degree of sacred authority the poems of Hesiod and Homer, supposed to have been written about nine hundred years before Christ. These works were believed to be divinely inspired by Apollo and the Muses. This was not a mere poetical figure of speech with the Grecians, as it would be with us; for they had a lively and undoubting faith that Apollo and the Muses were genuine deities, who took cognizance of the affairs of men, and filled the souls of prophets and poets with divine inspiration. It is said by some that



Hesiod was a priest in the temple of the Muses, on Mount Helicon. He seems to have been desirous to inculcate religious reverence, and a love of agriculture. He condemns licentiousness, irreverence to parents, and riches procured by fraud or violence. He strongly insists on the sacredness of an oath, and the laws of hospitality. He teaches to love those who love us, and to return gifts to the generous. He recommends withholding friendly offices from enemies; but declares that Jupiter will certainly punish those who refuse to pardon a suppliant offender. He gives a rather unintelligible account of the creation of the world from chaos. One of the most conspicuous agents in the work is Love, by which he probably meant the Principle of Attraction, drawing the elements into union, and producing a series of offspring; thus by the marriage of Heaven and Earth, Ocean was born. The deities, whom he describes as intermarrying, fighting, and plotting against each other, were the popular Gods of the country, the Spirits supposed to preside over planets and elements. He tells of huge giants called Titans, born of Heaven and Earth. One of them, named Chronos by the Greeks and Saturn by the Romans, dethroned his father Cœlus, or Heaven, and governed the universe. He is represented as devouring his own children; an allegorical way of saying that Time, whose Greek name is Chronos, destroys whatever he produces. One of his sons, named Jupiter, who escaped by artifice of his mother, expelled his father, and reigned in his stead. The Titans made war upon him, but he succeeded in chaining them all in the dungeons of Tartarus. These legends are supposed to be symbolical of the struggle of the elements when the world was formed.

Hesiod describes the administration of Saturn as the Golden Age of the world. Men lived like gods, without vices or passions, vexation or toil. In happy companionship with divine beings, they passed their days in tranquillity and joy, living together in perfect equality, united by mutual confidence and love. The earth was more beautiful than now, and spontaneously yielded an abundant

variety of fruits. Human beings and animals spoke the same language, and conversed freely together. Men were considered mere boys at a hundred years old. They had none of the infirmities of age to trouble them, and when they passed to regions of superior life, it was in a gentle slumber. Then followed the Silver Age, when the lives of men were shortened on account of their neglect of the gods, and injustice toward each other. This was succeeded by a Brazen Age of turbulence and insecurity. This degenerated still more into the Iron Age, corresponding to the Cali Yug of the Hindoos. Hesiod laments that his own birth happened in this unfortunate period of time, when the life of man is but a span, when fraud, violence, calumny, and all manner of crimes and diseases, everywhere abound.

Homer resembles Hesiod in his ideas of vice and virtue. Superior power, not moral excellence, is the essential element in his conception of divine beings. He represents them as very human in their passions, motives, and actions. They enjoy oblations of bread, wine, fruit, and the sacrifice of animals, as one man enjoys the hospitality of another. They are wrathful and relentless when offended, and can be appeased only by prayers and gifts. They fall in love with mortal women, by whom a race of demi-gods are produced. They resort to all manner of trickery and violence to accomplish their purposes. Thus Pallas Athena is represented as obtaining permission from Zeus to tempt Pandarus to violate a treaty solemnly sworn to. Such treachery is described as meritorious, by the Greek poets, because it was exercised in favour of their own nation.

A direct supernatural agency guides and controls all things, great and small. Birth, death, health, beauty, riches, all that a man is, and all that he has, are attributed to the gods. Every phenomenon of nature, every great thought, and noble impulse, is ascribed to divine agency. Any person highly gifted is supposed to be peculiarly dear to the deity who presides over that gift. Poets and prophets receive their inspiration from Phœbus, and Helen

owes her extraordinary beauty to the partiality of Aphrodite. Even a hearty laugh is ascribed to the genial influence of the gods. A constant living intercourse is supposed to exist between them and mortals. They descend visibly to this earth to converse with mankind. They often visit cities in the disguise of travellers, to inspect the conduct of men.

Wrong and foolish actions are likewise attributed to supernatural influence. Helen ascribes her elopement from her husband to an infatuation implanted in her heart by Aphrodite. A man, who goes out without his cloak in a cold night, is represented as saying: "A god deceived me that I did this thing."

The rewards of vice and virtue in another life, and all that is said of the condition of departed souls, is exceedingly dim and shadowy.

Succeeding poets enlarged and embellished the history of the gods, sometimes from their own imagination, sometimes from the traditions of various other nations; and the populace received it all with the ready credulity of bright, elastic, youthful natures. Many of the subordinate deities are obviously mere personifications of the elements and the forces of nature. Thus the violence of the ocean is represented as Poseidon swallowing thousands of victims. It is to be presumed that most of these legends were intended to convey, in allegorical form, some truth, physical or metaphysical, astronomical or moral; but at this distance of time, and with altogether foreign habits of thought, we can with difficulty perceive here and there a gleam of meaning; especially in the numerous amours of the gods, which, if taken literally, would make them appear more sensual than mortals.

A religion composed of such various and flexible fragments, of course left great freedom of construction to the worshippers. But the conservative principle which prevents all erratic things from flying entirely out of their orbits, came in, to check the excess of Grecian freedom. Gods from other countries were continually adopted into

their Pantheon, but this was never done until the formal sanction of the state had been obtained. When rites and festivals were once established, and the populace had invested them with the sacredness which belongs to time-hallowed usages, it was extremely difficult for government to abolish them. Thus the custom of running naked through the streets at the festival in honour of Pan, called Lupercalia, was continued long after a large portion of the community had come to regard it as indecent.

All their deities bear traces of a foreign origin, and the histories told of them are obviously the mixed legends of various nations. That their prominent deities were Spirits of the Planets, is indicated by their names: Apollo the Sun, Diana the Moon, Jupiter, Saturn, Mars, Mercury, and Venus. Like Hindoos and Egyptians, they consecrated the days successively to these Planetary Spirits. The seventh day was sacred to Saturn, from time immemorial. Homer and Hesiod call it the holy day.

Zeus, whom Romans called Jupiter, was differently represented at different epochs of their history. As the Son of Heaven, with Metis, the wisest of deities, for his wife, he resembles Brahma of Hindostan, and Amun of Egypt. Hesiod and Homer describe him as the Supreme Creator of heaven, earth, and sea, the Father of Gods and men; strengthening the weak, sustaining the strong, seeing past, present, and future, at a glance, and subject to nothing except the unalterable decrees of the Fates. He alone never appears in person on the stage of human affairs. He is so highly exalted above all beings, that he needs the agency of mediators to converse with mortals. Greeks, as well as Hindoos and Egyptians, believed in an element above the air, called ether. Some descriptions of Jupiter represent him as Son of Ether, armed with a thunderbolt, surrounded by moon and stars. This is a reappearance of Indra, the Hindoo god of the Firmament; and in this capacity he is married to his sister Juno, who represented the Air, and had Iris, the Rainbow, for her attendant and messenger. According to another account, Jupiter was the



Son of Saturn, or Time, and Rhea, the Earth. Cretans were accustomed to show the grotto on Mount Ida where he was said to be born, and the sepulchre where he was buried. But these traditions excited the ridicule and indignation of other Greeks. "All this is fiction," exclaims Callimachus; "for thou, O Father, livest forever."

Pallas Athena, whom Romans called Minerva, resembles the Hindo Sereswati, and the Egyptian Neith. She was goddess of wisdom, presiding over philosophy, poetry, arts, sciences, and military tactics. She is represented as for ever by the side of Jupiter, from whose brain she was born.

Dionysus, or Bacchus, was god of wine and vintage. He resembles Osiris in one department of his beneficence; namely, that of introducing the cultivation of vines. There is great similarity between Rama, Osiris, and Bacchus, in several of their adventures, and the ceremonies of their worship. They are all represented as having taught men agricultural arts, and performed great exploits in India.

Demeter, or Ceres, is Isis limited to the cultivation of the earth and the protection of harvests.

Hermes, or Mercury, was god of merchants, orators, and thieves. Like Thoth, he was messenger between gods and men, and conducted departed souls to the Judges of the Dead.

Pan, god of generation, was represented, like the Egyptian Kham, with the body and legs of a goat. His name signifies All, and was bestowed upon him because the generative principle pervades all things in the universe.

Rhea and Cybele were two very ancient goddesses, whose worship was introduced from different countries, and in process of time mixed together. They both represented the Earth, or Nature in her productive power. One of their names was Maia, the Hindoo name for the goddess of Nature.

Aphrodite, or Venus, goddess of beauty and pleasure, like the Hindoo Parvati, was born of the foam of the sea, and was the mother of Love.

Eros, or Cupid, god of love, is represented, like the Cama of the Hindoos, as a mischievous boy, armed with bow and arrows.

The central figure in Grecian mythology was Phœbus, or Apollo. He was god of light, of poetry, eloquence, and medicine, but was especially honoured as presiding over prophecy. As god of medicine, he was originally worshipped under the form of a Serpent, and men invoked him as the Helper. In later times, his worship was confounded with that of Helios, the visible sun; but, like the Hindoo Crishna, he was the representative of spiritual light and warmth. Poets sometimes called him "king of intellectual fire." Perhaps, like the Persian Mithras, he was the attendant Ferver, or guardian angel of the visible luminary. He excelled in music, and is often represented playing on a flute, with the nine Muses dancing round him, like the nine Gopiæ of Hindostan. Like Crishna, he is said to have killed a huge venomous serpent in his childhood, and to have performed the duties of a shepherd many years in the family of Admetus. Egyptians consecrated the island of Philæ, where Osiris and his twin sister Isis were said to have been born. Greeks had a tradition that the island of Delos had risen suddenly from the sea to provide a birth-place for Apollo and his twin sister, Phœbe, or Diana. No dog was allowed to approach the sacred island, no mortal was permitted to be born or die there, and no diseased person to remain. On the sea-shore stood a very beautiful temple of Apollo, the altar of which was never stained with blood.

In Greek mythology there was no one deity to represent the power of evil. Zeus was supposed to distribute good gifts from an urn at his right hand, and evil from an urn at his left. Among the subordinate deities several were of malign influence. Hades, whom Romans called Pluto, reigned in dismal subterranean regions, seated on a throne of sulphur, presiding over death and funerals. His countenance was gloomy and stern. Men erected no temples to him. The only sacrifices offered were black animals,

and their blood was not sprinkled on altars, but poured into holes in the ground. All unlucky things were sacred to him, especially the number two. Around his throne were seated the three Eumenides, or Furies, employed to execute the vengeance of the gods. On earth they inflicted war, pestilence, famine, and remorse. In the regions of Pluto, they scourged sinners with scorpions and tormented them continually. They were represented with bloody garments, frightful countenances, and snakes wreathed in their hair. Mortals feared to utter their names, or look up at their temples as they passed. If any person guilty of crime dared to approach their altars, it was supposed he would be instantly deprived of reason. The *Parcæ*, or Fates, were depicted as three old women, who spun the thread of life and cut it in twain. Black sheep were annually sacrificed to them, but no prayers were ever offered, because it was believed that not even Jupiter himself could change their inexorable decrees. It was supposed that no person could die, unless Proserpine, wife of Pluto, or one of the Fates, cut some hairs from his head. It was customary to strew the hair of the deceased on the threshold of the door, as an offering to them.

Every district and town had some tutelary deity to preside over it, who was supposed to be peculiarly connected with its welfare. Athenians considered themselves under the especial protection of Minerva, and Eleans placed themselves under the guardianship of Olympian Jupiter. It was deemed very hazardous to the prosperity, and even to the safety, of a state or district, to neglect any of the accustomed worship to their tutelary deity; therefore they never abandoned any of the ancient gods, though they introduced many new ones. They believed that the priests were possessed of knowledge, originally revealed from above, which enabled them to perform the ceremonies and repeat the words necessary to bring down Celestial Spirits into statues, and even into pillars and consecrated stones; and that prayers addressed to these visible objects were heard by the deities to whom they were dedicated.

Those who gained money by these images and ceremonies naturally encouraged the multiplication of them. To such an extent was this carried, that in Rome, fever, coughing, and sneezing, had each a separate deity.

They believed that departed human souls lingered around their former habitations and families, to protect them. They invoked them in time of domestic trouble, and offered sacrifices to appease them, when they thought they had been wronged, or were angry. They erected remarkable tombs, and at stated seasons repaired thither to offer prayers and oblations to the spirits of departed ancestors, whom they called Manes. The offerings generally consisted of flowers, fruit, wine, and incense; but sometimes animals were sacrificed, and even human beings. Religious rites, observed with regard to ancestors, are supposed to have introduced the worship of their spirits, under the name of Lares and Penates, household gods, protectors of home and hearthstone. Their images, made of silver, ivory, or wax, were worn about the neck, or kept in some safe, secluded corner of every house, and received the same oblations usually offered to the Manes. In process of time, altars and statues were erected to ancestors, as well as magnificent tombs, and every individual was at liberty to confer such honours on his progenitors. If a man had gained great victories, introduced useful inventions, or been distinguished for wisdom, the people naturally carried offerings to his altar, in token of gratitude. This was the beginning of Hero Worship, which prevailed very extensively in Greece and Rome. The old Hindoo idea concerning the ascending destiny of holy men, was transferred to brave men and national benefactors. Their souls, when released from the body, were supposed to become demi-gods, and to perform the office of mediators between mortals and the great deities. It was a common belief that they became stars. A comet that appeared soon after the death of Julius Cæsar was supposed to indicate his reception among the gods. The emperor Adrian named a new star for the beautiful Antinous, his deceased favourite, whose



soul he supposed had in that form taken its station in the heavens. An immortal father or mother was generally assigned to the men who became demigods. *Æsculapius*, celebrated for his skill in medicine, was said to be the son of *Apollo*, from whom he derived the divine gift. The goddess *Thetis* gave birth to *Achilles*, renowned for military exploits. *Hercules*, who relieved the earth from many monsters and tyrants, was the son of *Jupiter* by a mortal mother. When his body was placed on the funeral pile, a cloud descended, on which he was carried up in a chariot to *Olympus*, amid peals of thunder. There he became a god, and married *Hebe*, goddess of immortal youth. His friends, being unable to find his bones or ashes, manifested gratitude to his memory by erecting an altar on the spot where the burning pile had stood.

In addition to gods and demigods, every department of the universe was filled with Spirits, whom Greeks called Demons, whether their offices were good or evil. The good were called *Agatho-demons*, and the bad *Caco-demons*. *Hesiod* says :

"Thrice ten thousand holy demons rove  
This breathing world ; the immortals sent from *Jove*;  
Guardians of men, their glance alike surveys  
The upright judgments and the unrighteous ways.  
Hovering they glide to earth's extremest bound,  
A cloud aerial veils their forms around."

Nine nymphs, called *Muses*, the favourite companions of *Apollo*, presided over music, dancing, poetry, and all the liberal arts. The god of Love delighted to spend his nights with them in dance and song. They are represented as daughters of *Jupiter* and *Mnemosyne*, goddess of Memory, because memory and creative intellect combine to produce the arts. *Hesiod* calls them :

"The three three sacred maids, whose minds are knit  
In harmony, whose only thought is song.  
They sing the laws of universal heaven,  
And the pure manners of immortal gods.  
Anon they bend their footsteps toward the mount,

Rejoicing in their beauteous voice, and song  
Unperishing. Far round, the dusky earth  
Rings with their hymning voices; and beneath  
Their many rustling feet a pleasant sound  
Ariseth, as they take their onward way  
To their own father's presence."

In the same temple with the Muses were worshipped the Graces, likewise called Charities; three beautiful nymphs, presiding over gracious manners and all kindly offices. This united worship was an instructive custom, since cultivation of mind should always lead to moral graces.

There were countless genii to take care of hills, and streams, and flowers. Oreads frequented mountains, where they sat "listening to the talking streams below," sounding "sweet echoes to the huntsman's horn." Napeads protected valleys and shaded nooks. Dryads loved the groves, where the imaginative eye saw them dance in the bright play of sun and shadow. Ephydriads reclined near springs and fountains, lulled by the rippling waters. Naiads swam playfully in the rivers, and Nereids careered on the ocean billows.

Olympus, which early Greeks considered the loftiest mountain in the world, was believed to be the dwelling-place of the gods. Over its top there was supposed to be an opening into the metallic dome of heaven. In after times, when their ideas of the universe enlarged, they said divine beings dwelt in the exterior sphere of the heavens, revolving round the space which included the planets; and this residence above the firmament they called Olympus also.

The Hindoo idea of a subtile invisible body within the material body, reappeared in the descriptions of Greek poets. They represented the constitution of man as consisting of three principles: the soul, the invisible body, and the material body. The invisible body they called the ghost or shade, and considered it as the material portion of the soul. At death, the soul clothed in this subtile body went to enjoy paradise for a season, or suffer in hell till its

sins were expiated. Then if the Judges of the Dead had decreed it to exist again on earth, it returned and took a material body, more or less honourable, according to its sentence. But when the souls of heroes joined the gods, to return no more to earthly habitations, they parted with this subtle body, and it wandered in Elysium. Ulysses declares that he saw there the divine Hercules; "or rather his shade, for he himself was with the immortal gods, assisting at their festivals." The paradise, which they called Elysian Fields, some supposed to be part of the lower world, some placed them in a middle zone of the air, some in the moon, and others in far-off isles of the ocean. There shone more glorious sun and stars than illuminate this world. The day was always serene, the air forever pure, and a soft celestial light clothed all things in transfigured beauty. Majestic groves, verdant meadows, and blooming gardens, varied the landscape. The river Eridanus flowed through winding banks fringed with laurel. On its borders lived heroes who had died for their country, priests who had led a pure life, artists who had embodied genuine beauty in their works, and poets who had never degraded their muse with subjects unworthy of Apollo. There each one renewed the pleasures in which he formerly delighted. Orpheus, in long white robes, made enrapturing music on his lyre, while others danced and sung. The husband rejoined his beloved wife; old friendships were renewed; the poet repeated his verses, and the charioteer managed his horses. Some poets, rather sensually inclined, describe luxurious feasts, and say nothing can be more mean than the entertainments in Tartarus. In a retired valley, through a dark grove, drowsily glided the sluggish stream of Lethe. When the time arrived for souls to return again to earth, they were presented with a cup of its waters, which made them forget all they had seen and heard.

The subterranean realm where Pluto ruled, was called by the Greeks Hades, and by the Romans Tartarus. It was a deep, dark, awful region, encircled by a river of fire,

and surrounded by a triple wall. Here in the deepest pits were chained the proud Spirits called Titans, who rebelled against Jupiter. Here the condemned were scourged with snakes by the Furies; or were seated under a huge stone for ever ready to fall, wishing to move, but unable; or hungry wolves gnawed the liver, which for ever grew again; or they were consumed with thirst, standing in water that constantly eluded their touch. Some souls wandered in vast forests between Tartarus and Elysium, not good enough for one, or bad enough for the other. Some were purified from their sins by exposure to searching winds, others by being submerged in deep waters, others by passing through intense fires. After a long period of probation and suffering, many of them gained the Elysian Fields. When they had enjoyed a period proportioned to their merits, they were sent back to earth to take mortal bodies again. A few of the purest and noblest ascended to the gods.

The dead were represented as being ferried across the dark river Acheron to the regions of Pluto, by the boatman Charon, for whom a small coin was placed under the tongue of the deceased. He refused to carry over those who had not received burial in this world; they were obliged to wander on the banks for a whole century. In allusion to this, Virgil says:

“There stood the ghosts, and stretched their hands and cried,  
Imploring passage to the other side.”

The shade of Patroclus thus spoke to Achilles in a dream:

“Thou sleep’st, Achilles; and Patroclus, erst  
Thy best beloved, in death forgotten lies.  
Haste, give me burial! I would pass the gates  
Of Hades; for the shadows of the dead  
Now drive me from their fellowship afar.”

These ideas originated in Egyptian customs; a fact which may be traced even in the names. On the banks of the Nile was a beautiful plain, surrounded by groves, and in-



tersected with canals. It lay beyond Lake Acherusia, and being a celebrated place of interment, it was called *Elisiæns*, meaning Rest. On the borders of the lake was a tribunal to inquire into the character of the deceased. If his life had been wicked, they refused to convey his body to the cemetery, and it was thrown into a ditch prepared for the purpose, called *Tartar*. If the decision of the judges was favourable, eulogiums were publicly passed on his memory, and after the priests had received a small fee, his remains were conveyed across the lake into *Elisiæns*.

The Greeks had an ancient tradition concerning a Tree which grew in gardens of Paradise, and bore the golden Apples of Immortality. It was guarded by three nymphs, and a great Serpent. It was one of the labours of *Hercules* to gather some of these Apples of life. Ancient medallions represent the Tree with a Serpent twined round it. *Hercules* has gathered an Apple, and near him stand the three nymphs, called *Hesperides*.

There were several hereditary classes in Greece, but there was no law of caste to exclude men from any employment they chose, or from the investigation of any subject. In times as ancient as *Homer*, any man venerable for age or wisdom offered prayers and sacrifices to the gods, and performed religious ceremonies for the people. As the country grew older, the priesthood became more established and conspicuous; but an element of freedom was always preserved, which rendered their influence very different from that of the exclusive caste of priests in *Hindustan* and *Egypt*. This circumstance doubtless contributed much toward that intellectual energy and freedom of inquiry which so eminently characterized the ancient Greeks. In some places, the priesthood was hereditary in certain families. In others, the prince conferred the office on whomsoever he deemed worthy. Sometimes priests were elected by lot, sometimes by votes of the people. They were required to be of good moral character, in sound health, and not deformed in any way; it being deemed irreverent to consecrate to the gods any thing im-

pure or defective. They were usually chosen from the upper classes, and on all public occasions they took their places with kings and the highest civil officers. In most of the cities the care of worship was intrusted to chief magistrates, who were often themselves consecrated to the priesthood. In some places the king was high priest, and all important sacrifices for the good of the commonwealth were performed by him only. On private or ordinary occasions, the father of the family, or the oldest and most honourable man present, might perform religious rites. But when any great calamity was to be averted, or extraordinary blessing to be obtained, they sought the services of the priesthood; believing that the gods had especially commissioned them, and were more ready to hear their prayers than those of other men. On such occasions, they often ascended mountains to ask counsel of the gods; such places being invested with peculiar sanctity, and deemed nearer to the deities than other portions of the earth. They often performed ablutions in running streams, or were sprinkled with consecrated water, as a necessary preparation for religious ceremonies. All those intrusted with religious affairs were summoned at stated periods to appear before certain magistrates and give an account how they had discharged their duties. In small places, one priest fulfilled all the sacred offices, but in large cities they had various grades of assistants. Each god had a chief priest and subordinate priests; and in every state was a Supreme Pontiff, whose duty it was to superintend the others, and preside at the highest and most sacred rites. Some, who were devoted to the most elevated functions of worship, lived retired from worldly affairs, and observed the strictest temperance and chastity. They drank juice of hemlock and other herbs, to keep the blood cool and the passions in subjection. Some even deprived themselves of manhood, from the idea that they could serve the gods with more purity. A class of them were called Prophets, and expounded oracles. In some places, these never tasted animal food, or any thing boiled. Some orders were allowed

to marry, but second unions were deemed disreputable. Indeed, in the early days of strictness, to have been twice married excluded a man from the priesthood. A tenth part of the harvests, the mines, and the spoils taken in war, were appropriated to the service of the gods. The priests had a prescribed share, and many of them were wealthy.

From Egypt was introduced an order of priests called Asclepiades, descendants of Æsculapius, god of medicine. The results of medical experience acquired in the temples, they divulged only to the initiated, under solemn promise of secresy. A healing and prophetic serpent was kept in their temples, and the staff of Æsculapius was represented wreathed with a serpent. These medical priests applied magnetic remedies by the motion of their hands, sought to induce soothing dreams, and operated on the imagination of patients by charms and conjurations. They carefully observed the course of diseases, and noted down the results of their practice. The populace considered them both prophets and physicians. Aristides eulogized their skill at Smyrna, and the first practical physician in Rome, twenty years before Christ, was of their order. In later times foreigners were freely admitted to their schools. They were the founders of modern scientific medicine.

Women were admitted to the Grecian priesthood, shared its highest dignities, and in such capacities were regarded with great veneration. Several of them are mentioned as wives and mothers, and they seem generally to have been dignified and exemplary matrons. They were of various orders, superior and inferior, and were assisted by young girls of the highest families, who gathered flowers, wove garlands, and embroidered veils for the statues. In the temples of Venus, and also of Cybele, were troops of young men and women employed as dancers; mostly slaves sent as gifts to the goddess. They are often represented on antique vases, standing on tiptoe, with arms gracefully raised, turning their slender forms in the undulating movements of some sacred dance. All the money these women received from their lovers was paid into the treasury of

the priests. Several temples of Venus were built with funds thus obtained.

The Romans instituted an order of priestesses, six in number, called the Vestal Virgins. They were required to be of good family, free from bodily defects, and not more than ten years old, or less than six, at the time of consecration. They took a vow of strict chastity, the breach of which was supposed to bring calamities on the whole people. If any one was detected in breaking this vow, she was buried alive. In the course of the thousand years, during which this order existed, only thirteen were thus punished for violation of their oath. They wore long white linen robes, with a white vest edged with purple. Their hair was cut short and bound with a close fillet. It was their business to keep the sacred fire of Vesta burning perpetually on the altar of her temple day and night, to offer prayers and sacrifices for the good of the state, and instruct their successors in office. If the fire chanced to go out, it was deemed an omen of some great national calamity. In such a case, the careless Vestal was severely scourged by the High Priest, and the fire was rekindled from rays of the sun brought to a focus with something like burning glasses; the process being accompanied with solemn ceremonies and prayers. When these priestesses appeared in public, they were treated with the greatest veneration. Any insult to them was a capital offence. If they met a criminal on his way to execution, he was set at liberty, if they declared the meeting accidental. They were handsomely maintained at public expense, and after thirty years of service, were at liberty either to remain in the temple, or go out and marry. Polygamy was discountenanced in Greece, and forbidden by law in Rome.

Oblations and sacrifices to the gods varied at different epochs of time, and according to the characters of the deities. In the rude ages, it was customary to sacrifice beautiful girls to Cybele; but afterward, in lieu of this, they made a present of slaves to her temple. Young maidens used to be sacrificed to Diana, but afterward they



were merely scourged at her altar. It was often supposed the gods demanded the sacrifice of a human being, to atone for some sin, or avert some calamity. When the Greek army was detained at Aulis, by contrary winds, the augurs being consulted, declared that one of the kings had offended Diana, and she demanded the sacrifice of his daughter Iphigenia. It was like taking the father's life-blood, but he was persuaded that it was his duty to submit for the good of his country. The maiden was brought forth for sacrifice, in spite of her tears and supplications; but just as the priest was about to strike the fatal blow, Iphigenia suddenly disappeared, and a goat of uncommon beauty stood in her place. The priests judged by favourable omens that the gods accepted the animal for sacrifice, and the princess was consecrated to the service of Diana's temple. In Sparta, it being declared upon one occasion that the gods demanded a human victim, the choice was made by lot, and fell on a damsel named Helena. But when all was in readiness, an eagle descended, carried away the priest's knife, and laid it on the head of a heifer, which was sacrificed in her stead. The Spartans henceforth abolished such immolations, considering this an omen that they were not acceptable to the deities. Such sacrifices were always rare among the Grecians, and when they did occur, it was usually in obedience to some oracle. The infernal gods, and the manes of ancestors, were supposed peculiarly to require human victims. Prisoners taken in war were frequently offered to appease the ghosts of those who had been slain by their countrymen. Achilles sacrificed twelve young Trojans at the funeral of his friend Patroclus. Aristomenes sacrificed three hundred captives at once, one of whom was a king of Sparta. The custom was never favoured at Rome. Numa, who succeeded Romulus, manifested extreme reluctance to offer human sacrifices. Lentulus, Consul of Rome about seventy years before Christ, prohibited the practice. Tiberius, fourteen years after our era, and Adrian one hundred and seventeen years after, published edicts to the same effect. Commodus, more

than half a century afterward, offered a human victim to Mithra. Very rare instances are said to have occurred in some parts of the Roman empire as late as our fourth century.

The old Braminical idea that every sin must have its prescribed amount of punishment, and that the gods would accept the life of one person as atonement for the sins of others, prevailed also in Greece and Rome; but there it mainly took the form of heroic self-sacrifice for the public good. Cicero says: "The force of religion was so great among our ancestors, that some of their commanders have, with their faces veiled, and with the strongest expressions of sincerity, sacrificed themselves to the immortal gods to save their country." An oracle having declared that the Athenians would overcome the Thracians if the daughter of the king was sacrificed to the gods, she cheerfully offered to die. Afterwards, his three other daughters volunteered themselves as victims, to avert a pestilence, supposed to be sent in punishment for the sins of the people. The plague was stayed, and the public testified gratitude by erecting a temple to their memory. In times of calamity it was common in some parts of Italy for a young man to offer himself as an expiatory sacrifice to Apollo. He was very richly dressed, and after certain religious ceremonies ran full speed to a precipice, whence he threw himself into the sea. Codrus, the last king of Athens, sought death in the fore-front of the battle, because an oracle had declared that they whose general should be slain would gain the victory. It is recorded that three hundred and sixty-two years before our era, the earth opened in the Roman forum, and pestilential vapors issued from the chasm. An oracle declared it would close whenever that which constituted the glory of Rome should be thrown into it. A noble youth, named Marcus Curtius, inquired whether anything in Rome was more precious than arms and courage. The oracle having answered in the negative, he arrayed himself in armour, mounted a horse richly caparisoned, solemnly devoted himself to

death in presence of the people, and leaped into the abyss, which instantly closed over him.

In primitive ages, when men lived mostly on vegetables, they offered only water, grain, salt, fruit, and flowers to the gods, to propitiate them, and thereby obtain temporal blessings. But when they began to eat meat and spices and drink wine, they offered the same; naturally supposing the deities would be pleased with whatever was useful or agreeable to themselves. They imagined that some gods were partial to human victims, some to animals, others to fruit and flowers. To the celestial gods they offered white victims, at sunrise, or in open day. To the Manes, and infernal deities, they sacrificed black animals in the night. Each god had some creature peculiarly devoted to his worship. They sacrificed a bull to Mars, a dove to Venus, and to Minerva, a heifer without blemish, which had never been put to the yoke. If a man was too poor to sacrifice a living animal, he offered an image of one made with bread. The aerial deities were thought to delight in harmonious sounds; therefore, while they sacrificed to them, they played on musical instruments, and danced round the altar, singing sacred hymns. Most of the ancient nations believed the gods were affected by music, the same as men. The temples were full of votive offerings, such as garlands, crowns, vases, and golden cups. In the temples of Æsculapius were a multitude of eyes, ears, hands, feet, and other members of the human body, made of wax, silver, or gold, and presented by those whom the god had cured of blindness, deafness, and other diseases. Sailors carried small ships to Neptune, in token of gratitude for being saved from shipwreck. Fishermen suspended nets in honour of the Nereids. Groves consecrated to Pan were hung with pipes and garlands, by shepherds, thankful for the multiplication of their flocks and herds. Sometimes tablets were affixed to the walls of temples, explaining the cause of the offering. In solemn promises and contracts, men invoked the gods, and women the goddesses. They swore by the Manes of ancestors, by the Spirits of sun,

moon, stars, earth, and rivers; but they deemed it irreverent to do so on slight occasions. Before every undertaking, great or small, all classes invoked the assistance of the gods. They burned incense, or poured libations of wine on the altars, with prayers, before they started on a journey, or entertained a stranger, or retired to sleep. At the rising and setting of the sun or moon, people throughout Greece might be seen prostrating themselves, and uttering invocations to the deities. Humble dependence on the gods, and frequent prayers, were everywhere strictly inculcated. Mortals were taught to expect divine assistance in the hour of need in proportion to the number and value of their offerings. Some carried their devotional feelings to such an extreme degree, that they spent nearly all their time in offering prayers and sacrifices. The most universal and earnest entreaty was that their children might survive them; it being considered a great misfortune to leave no one in the world who would consider it a sacred duty to perform religious ceremonies for their departed souls. The Spartans never used but one form of prayer, and that was very laconic: "May the gods grant whatever is honourable and good for us, and enable us to endure misfortunes." In every part of Greece the hearthstone was sacred to Vesta, goddess of fire. If any wanderer took refuge there, though he might be the most deadly enemy, he was safe from hostility, and had his wants supplied. They not only scrupulously observed all the religious rites handed down by their ancestors, but in Athens they kept a solemn feast every new moon in honour of all the gods, including those of nations with whom they were connected by commerce. So fearful were they of omitting any, they even erected altars to unknown gods. The welfare of individuals and the prosperity of the state was supposed to be hazarded by any neglect of the established worship. Cicero says: "We may be assured that Rome owes her grandeur and success to the conduct of those who were tenacious of their religious duties."



On some great national occasions, they sacrificed a hundred, or even a thousand, animals at a time. All persons admitted to solemn sacrifices were required to abstain from sensual pleasures for several days previous, and perform ceremonies of purification with water brought from fresh, flowing streams. In the vestibule of temples stood a marble vase filled with holy water, with which all who were admitted to the interior were sprinkled as they passed. Water consecrated by priests was considered efficacious as a preservative from evil, and to cleanse from all pollution. It was called Lustral Water, from a word signifying to purify. It was used to sprinkle the markets, the fountains, and the streets of cities, in time of pestilence, and was always employed at funerals; the presence of death being regarded as contaminating.

The priests wore rich robes, of colours suited to the occasion, and not bound by any girdle. They sacrificed to Ceres in white, to the celestial gods in purple, and to the infernal ones in black. If they had touched a dead body, or a diseased person, or their garments had been in any way polluted, it was unlawful for them to officiate. Sometimes they wore a mitre, and were always crowned with laurel, or other garlands. While they prayed, they held green branches in their hands, usually of laurel or olive. If doubtful whether their petitions would be granted, they touched the knees of the statues with these boughs; if hopeful, they touched the right hand, but never the left, because that was deemed unlucky. Sometimes, in extreme humility of supplication, they kissed the feet of the statue, and knelt or prostrated themselves on the ground. They prayed to the celestial gods with hands uplifted toward heaven, or the image of him they addressed, and concluded by kissing their right hand to the statue; but when they invoked the subterranean deities, they turned their hands downward. The animals to be sacrificed, having been examined by the priests and pronounced unblemished, were led to the temple covered with garlands. Sometimes, on occasions of solemn thanksgiving, their horns were

gilded. The altar was three times sprinkled by dipping a laurel branch in holy water, and the people assembled round it were three times sprinkled also. Frankincense was taken from the censer with three fingers, and strewed upon the altar three times; that number being scrupulously observed in most religious ceremonies, because an oracle had declared that all sacred things ought to be in threes. Before the sacrifice, the chief priest called upon the assembly to unite with him in prayer that the gods would accept their offerings, and grant them health and happiness. He then took a cup of wine, and having tasted it himself, he caused the people to do the same, and poured the remainder between the horns of the victim. If the beast escaped the sacrificing stroke, or struggled, or bellowed, it was thought an unlucky omen. Portions were reserved for the priests and servitors of the temple, and the remainder was burned with frankincense and wine. When the ceremonies were all completed, they had a grand feast.

They used awful forms of imprecation to invoke the infernal deities. The curses of parents, kings, priests, or prophets, were peculiarly dreaded; it being thought there was no possible way to avoid the effects. Homer thus describes a woman whose son had killed his uncle:

"She beat the ground, and called the Powers beneath  
On her own son to wreak her brother's death.  
Hell heard her curses from the realms profound,  
And the red fiends that walk their nightly round."

Alcibiades being accused of mutilating the statues of Hermes, and imitating the Mysteries of Ceres, was sentenced to exile from Athens, and to be cursed by all the priests and priestesses. They all obeyed except Theano, who said she was appointed to the priesthood to bless and not to curse. It was a common opinion that prayers were more efficacious in an ancient tongue, because gods better liked the primitive language of men, as being nearer to nature. Hence it was usual for magicians to pronounce their incantations in words unknown to the people.

The religious festivals in Greece were very numerous, and some of them exceedingly magnificent. They had flowery processions in the spring-time, and processions with sheaf-offerings in the autumn. The days observed in honour of deities and heroes were innumerable. It was a law that during any of their great religious festivals no person should be insulted or slandered. The most solemn of them all were the Mysteries of Isis, introduced from Egypt, and called by Greeks the Eleusinian Mysteries, sacred to Ceres. The men and women initiated into these Mysteries were thought to be peculiarly under the care of the gods in this life, and secure of the best places in Elysium. Not to observe them, was a reproach to any public man. The enemies of Socrates brought it as a heavy charge against him. No foreigner was admitted, and if any uninitiated person happened to be present by mistake, he was put to death. If a member divulged any portion of the secrets, he was condemned to die; and it was deemed unsafe to remain under the same roof with him, for fear of some divine judgment. The poet Æschylus was in great danger of losing his life, because he was suspected of having alluded to the Mysteries in one of his dramas. No person who had accidentally killed another, or been guilty of any crime, or convicted of witchcraft, was allowed to enter. To some of the interior mysteries, none but priests were ever admitted. The High Priest who officiated on these occasions, was vowed to celibacy, and required to devote himself entirely to divine things. This festival was observed every five years, and continued nine days. On the last day, the candidates for initiation having gone through a probation of fasting, purification, sacrifices, and prayers, were admitted for the first time to the Mysteries. What these were is unknown, but some of the external circumstances are recorded. At eventide the priests led them to a vast edifice called the Mystical Temple. At the entrance, they washed their hands in consecrated water, being admonished to present themselves with pure minds, without which external cleanness would be of no avail. With a loud voice,

the priests warned all the profane to retire, and the worshippers remained alone. Thunders rolled around them, lightning flashed across the thick darkness, and revealed startling apparitions as it passed. At last, the inner doors were opened. The interior of the temple burst upon them in a blaze of light, and strains of ravishing music floated through the air. The statue of Ceres stood in the midst, splendidly adorned. On her head were the horns of the lunar crescent, and her robe was covered with shining stars. In one hand she held a basket of grain, in the other, the Egyptian musical instrument called a sistrum. One foot rested on the ocean, the other was stepping on the earth. At the foot of this statue, priests crowned the novitiates with garlands of sacred myrtle. Then followed a series of stately pageants, which it is supposed were intended to represent the creation of the world, the progress of society out of barbarism, the passage of the soul through death, frightful pictures of tortures in Tartarus, and enchanting visions of the Elysian Fields. Whatever might have been the purport of these things, the writings of the ancients indicate that they made a profound and solemn impression on those who witnessed them. The garments worn at initiation were deemed very sacred. They were never laid aside till much worn, and then they were preserved as swaddling clothes for their children, or consecrated to Ceres. The Unity of God, the immortal progress and destiny of the soul, and other secret doctrines, were taught in the sanctuary, to an initiated few; but elsewhere, they were veiled in symbols. Nearly all the religious hymns and odes used on this and similar occasions are entirely lost. The sublimity of their character may be inferred from the following prose translation of a Hymn to Jupiter, written by Cleanthes, a stoic philosopher, who died two hundred and forty years before the birth of Christ:

“Hail, Great King, and Father of the Gods! Thou, who hast many names, but who art One, sole, omnipotent Virtue! Jupiter, Author of Nature, who governest all things by thy wisdom! allow mortals to call upon thee;



for all things that exist are thy offspring, images of thy being, echoes of thy eternal voice. I will sing to thee, and exalt thy power without end. The whole universe moves by thy influence. The infinite variety of souls that inhabit earth, sea, and the ethereal spheres, are subject to thy wise control. The lightnings are thy ministers. They flash from thy powerful hand, and all nature trembles. Thus thunder-armed, thou guidest creation by an unerring law, and through the present admixture of evil thou guidest all to good. Thou curbest all excess, and wilt cause all confusion to result in universal and eternal order. Unhappy are mortals ignorant of thy law, which, if they obeyed, would lead them into a virtuous and happy life. In blind frenzy they stray from the chief good, tempted by thirst of glory, or shameless avarice, or voluptuous pleasures. But oh, great Jupiter, giver of all good, who dwellest with lightnings in the clouds of heaven, save mankind from these dreadful errors! Remove all shadows from our minds, and enable us to understand thy pure and righteous laws. Thus honoured with a knowledge of thee, we shall be fitted to return the gift in praises of thy mighty works; and neither mortal nor immortal beings can be more blest than in singing thy immutable, universal law with everlasting hymns."

The Greeks had four national games, intended to excite to honourable ambition, and preserve manliness of character in the citizens. The most solemn and magnificent of these were the Olympian, dedicated to Jupiter. Prizes were given for wrestling, leaping, chariot-racing, music, poetry, eloquence, painting, and sculpture; thus consecrating to the gods all strength of body and cultivation of mind. The prize was simply a crown of olive leaves, but he who obtained it was carried home in a triumphal chariot in the midst of acclamations, was honoured with a high place on all great occasions, and ever after maintained at the public expense. They were celebrated every fourth year, and continued five days. No women except priestesses of Ceres were allowed to be present. All hostilities ceased

during these games, and states at deadly war with each other met in friendship. By general consent of all Greece, no war or violence was ever allowed to enter the sacred territory of Elis, where this festival was observed. Pausanias says: "Many things may a man see and hear in Greece worthy of admiration; but above them all, the doings at Eleusis and the sights of Olympia have somewhat in them of a soul divine."

The Panathenæa was a festival dedicated to Minerva, in which the citizens of Athens of all classes and ages were represented. It was observed once in five years, and lasted several days, during which they had a race through the streets with torches, a mimic sea-fight, performances on musical instruments, circular choruses of many hundred voices, dramatic representations, and dances by young boys in armour. The sacred garment of Minerva, embroidered with gold by two young virgins appointed to that service, was carried in procession through the streets of Athens to her magnificent temple called the Parthenon. There were troops of young girls wreathed with flowers, carrying baskets and vases; the most vigorous old men carrying olive branches, animals for sacrifice covered with garlands, middle-aged men with shields and spears, young men crowned with millet, singing hymns, foreigners and their families bearing little boats, and bands of young children in festal robes. This occasion was considered so holy that all prisoners were released, and men distinguished for bravery or wisdom received a crown of gold.

At Rome, games in honour of the Great Gods were annually performed in the Circus. The festival, which lasted ten days, began with a magnificent procession. The statues of the Great Gods were carried through the principal streets to the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline Mount. The splendid chariots in which they were conveyed were drawn by superb horses, camels, elephants, stags, and sometimes by lions and tigers. The chief magistrate led the van, and before him was carried the winged Goddess of the Fortune of Rome. There was an immense concourse of nobles on

horseback, boys leading horses for the races, musicians playing on a variety of instruments, women and youths winding through the mazes of a dance, and people dressed as Nymphs, Fauns, Satyrs, and Sileni, carrying large garlands of flowers. The procession closed with the High Priest, the Augurs carrying the Sibylline Books, a long train of subordinate priests, and the Vestal Virgins. After sacrifices to the gods were performed in the Circus, music struck up, and the games commenced. The expense attending these exhibitions was immense. At one of these festivals, it is said that five hundred lions and eighteen elephants were slain in five days, in the combats of wild beasts.

The Dionysia, or Bacchanalia, in honour of Bacchus, were celebrated when the vines began to bud. Magistrates and chief priests presided. In the daytime they had feasts, music, and dramatic representations. In the evening, processions of men and women went about dancing, shouting, feigning intoxication, and making all manner of antic motions. They were masked, crowned with ivy or grape leaves, and dressed in fawn skins, to imitate Pan, Silenus, the Satyrs, and other attendants on Bacchus. They made a great noise with drums, pipes, and rattles. They carried drinking cups, and spears twined with ivy, and poles terminating in a pine cone, or surmounted by the emblem of generation, to signify the fructifying power of the sun upon the earth in spring time. From the worship of Osiris, in Egypt, this emblem was transferred to Greece, where it was called the phallus; thence to Rome, under the name of the lingam. It was sometimes made of gold, twined with garlands, and surmounted by a golden star. The thyrsus, or pine cone of Bacchus, often terminated in the Egyptian Cross, which has already been explained to have a similar signification.

Romans observed a festival called Saturnalia, to commemorate the primeval equality of mankind in the Golden Age of Saturn. It continued five days, during which masters waited upon their servants. Slaves were richly

dressed, and assumed the cap usually worn only by free-men; a custom in which the modern Liberty Cap originated. All labour was suspended, many prisoners were liberated, people interchanged presents with each other, and indulged in all manner of jests with their superiors, without fear of giving offence. The temple of Saturn was brilliantly illuminated, and festivities abounded everywhere.

At the festival of Cybele, Mother of the Gods, a whole day was spent in blowing trumpets. Her image, seated in a chariot drawn by lions, or oxen, was carried in procession, accompanied by the clash of cymbals, and the thundering sound of numerous drums. Like Isis, she was the Goddess of Fruitful Nature, who, under one name or another, was adored in almost every country. Her worship was introduced from Asia Minor, and was characterized by several savage and gloomy customs, inharmonious with the smiling and graceful character of Greece; but it had a place, because it met the wants of stern, fanatical temperaments. Her priests, called Corybantes, deprived themselves of manhood. They excited themselves into strange frenzies, by wild and clamorous music, and their utterance, while under this inspiration, was deemed prophetic. In some parts of Greece, bands of mendicant devotees were continually wandering about, wearing images of Cybele on their breasts, and making a great noise with cymbals, to extort alms. There were generally soothsayers among them, who gained money from the people by predicting their fortunes.

The festivals of Apollo and Diana were celebrated with great pomp at the sacred island of Delos. It was unlawful to put any criminal to death during the preparation and celebration of these ceremonies. When the splendid procession returned through the streets of Athens, people ran to their doors and made profound obeisance as it passed.

On the twenty-fifth of December, a festival in honour of Bacchus was held to commemorate the return of the sun from the winter solstice, to revivify the vineyards and give flavour to the wines. In later times, when many Persian ceremonies were introduced into Rome, the same day was held



as a festival in honour of Mithras, their Spirit of the Sun.

Of all the Grecian states, Sparta alone had a law that men should serve the gods with as little expense as possible. Being asked the reason of this, Lycurgus answered: "Lest at any time the service of the gods should be intermitted;" for he feared, if religion were as expensive as in other parts of Greece, it might happen that out of poverty of some, and covetousness of others, worship would be neglected; and he conceived sincere devotion to be more pleasing to the deities than costly sacrifices. The Athenians being several times defeated by the Spartans, sent to the temple of Jupiter Ammon, to inquire why they, who served the gods with more pomp and splendour than all the other Grecians, were conquered by Spartans, who were so mean in their worship. The oracle merely replied, that the simple, sincere service of Spartans was more acceptable to divine powers than the costly offerings of other people.

Two species of divination were employed by the Greeks. The first was supposed to be a direct inspiration of the gods, without any human effort; the second was by the performance of certain mysterious rites, the rules of which were believed to have been made known by the gods to holy men in ancient times. Prophecy by direct inspiration was of three kinds. First, through people believed to be possessed by Spirits, that spoke out of their breast or belly, they themselves remaining motionless and speechless all the while; second, by those who were seized with a sudden and inexplicable frenzy; these were called enthusiasts; third, by those who fell into stupors and trances, and spoke of strange things they saw and heard. The speech of all these classes was deemed oracular. Music was often resorted to to excite prophetic frenzy. Cicero says: "They whose minds, scorning the limitations of the body, fly and rush abroad when inflamed and incited by some ardour, behold things which they predict. Such minds which inhere not in their bodies, are inflamed by various causes. Some are incited by a certain modulation of voices and Phrygian songs."

Of oracles from those in trances, Epimenides of Crete

is an example. It is said, that being sent by his father to tend sheep, he entered into a cave, where he fell asleep and slept for fifty years. After that, he had the power of sending his soul out of his body, and recalling it at pleasure. During such seasons, he appeared perfectly senseless and entranced. The gods held familiar intercourse with him, and endowed him with powers of prophecy. A terrible plague desolated Athens, and people believed the city was infested by Evil Spirits. Having heard the fame of Epimenides, they sent a vessel to bring him to their shores, though Solon strongly disapproved thereof. It is not recorded what medical remedies he advised on his arrival, but he performed many religious ceremonies to cleanse the city. He scattered a flock of black sheep and white sheep, and wherever the white ones lay down he ordered the Athenians to erect an altar and sacrifice to some celestial god; wherever the black ones rested, similar honours were paid to the subterranean deities. The altars "to unknown gods" are said to have originated in this circumstance. The plague ceased soon after, and it was attributed to his influence.

It is likewise said of Hermotimus, a famous prophet of Clazomenæ, that his soul often separated itself from his body, wandered in every part of the world to explain futurity, and after a time returned again. On one of these occasions, his wife burned the insensible body according to the custom at Greek funerals, probably supposing him to be really dead. He received divine honours in a temple which no woman was permitted to enter.

It is not recorded whether Cassandra, princess of Troy, was subject to trances, or any peculiar affection of the nerves; but it is stated that her countrymen considered her insane, and disregarded her predictions, which, nevertheless, came true. Tradition says, that when a child, she and her little brother played in the vestibule of Apollo's temple, and staying too late to be conveyed home, were put to sleep in the temple on a couch of laurel leaves. In the morning, their nurses found them unharmed, though

two serpents were licking their ears. From that time henceforth their hearing was so acute that they could distinguish the voices of the gods. Another tradition was, that Apollo was enamoured of Cassandra, and imparted to her the gift of prophecy; but when she refused his solicitations, he added that her words should never be believed. In all this we can only discover that Grecians believed Apollo, serpents, and laurel, to be in some way connected with prophetic inspiration. She continually foretold the destruction of Troy, and warned her countrymen against the stratagem of the wooden horse, by which the city was taken. She truly foretold the manner of her own death, and that of the Grecian conqueror, who carried her away captive. Œnone, the first wife of Paris, is said to have possessed the gift of prophecy, and to have been able to perceive the medicinal qualities of plants. But we have no information by which we can conjecture the state of her health or the condition of her nerves.

Almost as little is known of the Roman Sibyls, a name bestowed on women supposed to be inspired by the gods. It was believed that Apollo threw them into a kind of ecstacy, in which they could foresee the future. Some philosophers attributed their prophetic power to disease, or a melancholy state of mind. The most famous of them was the Cumæan Sibyl, said to have written the collection of verses known under the name of Sibylline Books. An unknown old woman offered nine of these books to Tarquin, who refused to buy them, on account of the great price. She burned three, and returned to offer six for the same money. Being again refused, she burned three more, and came back to offer the remainder on the same terms she had originally proposed for the whole. The king being struck by her mysterious conduct, sent to consult the augurs. When they had examined into the matter, they told him that what he had despised was a divine gift. The books were accordingly bought at the price demanded, and laid up in a stone chest in the temple of Jupiter. By degrees, twelve more volumes were added, and two men were

appointed to take charge of them. These books were consulted with much formality on all important political occasions. Among other prophecies, they declared that the golden age was the spring of the world, the silver age its summer, the brazen age its autumn, the iron age its winter. Then came Deucalion's Deluge, and all things were destroyed. These completed the Great Astronomical Year, when the same process was renewed, to terminate again in the same way. When the temple of Jupiter was burned, and the books with it, delegates were sent to collect such Sibylline verses as could be found scattered through the country. After the priests had rejected those deemed spurious, about one thousand were retained and placed in the new temple, preserved in chests of gold under the pedestal of Apollo's statue. So many predictions were set afloat by private collections of these verses, some of them not unlikely to be troublesome to the state, that laws were repeatedly passed for the destruction of all except the genuine books in the temple. These were again destroyed by the great fire in Nero's reign; but as late as two hundred and seventy years after Christ, some Roman senators were in favour of consulting Sibylline verses concerning a proposed war.

Of prophecy uttered in sudden frenzy, the most celebrated was the oracle at Delphi. There was a deep cavern at this place, and some goats, that put their heads into the aperture, were observed to leap wildly and make strange noises. When the herdsman peeped in, to discover the cause, he too began to jump about and rave like a madman. The report of this spread rapidly, and many came to examine the miraculous grotto. All who inhaled its atmosphere talked incoherently for a time, and ancient reverence for all unpremeditated speech caused their exclamations to be taken for prophecies. This led to so much confusion that a law was passed forbidding people to approach the cavern. A seat, called a tripod, was placed at the entrance, and a woman, chosen by the priests, was placed there during one month in the spring of the year,



to receive the inspiration of the god, and answer those who came to consult the oracle. This cavern was in a semi-circular declivity, on the south side of Mount Parnassus. The Greeks believed it to be the centre of the world. Here was built a temple to Apollo, which became one of the most splendid monuments of man's reverence for the supernatural. It contained a statue of the god in pure gold. From all surrounding states and nations people flocked thither to consult the oracle. Lawgivers came to ask what would be beneficial for their people; kings sent ambassadors to inquire what would be the result of projected wars; and wealthy individuals sought for guidance in every important transaction of life. As it was customary for all these applicants to make rich presents, Delphi was adorned with an inconceivable number of costly treasures and beautiful works of art. When Nero, in his wars, plundered the temple, he carried away five hundred brazen statues of gods and heroes. The priestess was called Pythia. She was required to dress very simply, and be strictly temperate and pure in her life. At first it was customary to choose young maidens, but the sacredness of their office proved an insufficient protection against the passions of some who came to consult them, and a law was passed that no woman under fifty years old should be appointed. On the east side of the temple flowed a clear, sweet stream from Parnassus, called the fountain of Castalia, believed to impart inspiration to all who drank of its waters. Before the Pythia approached the tripod, she bathed her whole body, especially her hair, in this sacred spring. She shook a laurel tree that grew near it, crowned herself with a garland from it, and ate some of the leaves. As soon as she inhaled the vapour from the cavern, her countenance became pale, her eyes sparkled, and all her limbs trembled. While the priest held her over it, she foamed at the mouth, shrieked, howled, and uttered frantic exclamations. These were supposed to be the voice of the god speaking through her, and priests were appointed to write them down. On one occasion her paroxysms were

so frightful that they all ran away, and she died, after lingering a few days in great distress. Sometimes the symptoms were more mild, and her words more coherent. For a long time oracles were uttered in poetry, but it being observed that the god of poetry made the worst possible verses, they were afterward delivered in prose. It was believed that Jupiter, who held the books of The Fates, and revealed more or less of them as he pleased, had peculiarly intrusted Apollo with the department of prophecy; therefore his oracles were numerous, and in higher reputation than others. The one in the temple at Delos was remarkable for the clearness and directness of its answers. That at Delphi was the most celebrated, and the most ancient, being founded more than twelve hundred years before the Christian era. Its predictions were considered so infallible, that it became a proverb to say: "It is as true as responses from the tripod." By what rules the priests were guided in choosing a Pythia, we are not informed. They probably selected nervous and impressible subjects. That some were better adapted to the office than others, is shown by the concurrent testimony that this oracle sometimes lost its prophetic power, and after a time regained it. Plato represents Socrates as saying: "The prophetess at Delphi, and the priestess in Dodona, have, when insane, produced many advantages, both public and private, to the Greeks; but when they have been in a prudent state, they have been the cause of very trifling benefits, or indeed of none at all."

The most ancient of all the numerous oracles in Greece was that of Dodona, where oaks were said to utter prophecies; a rumor probably caused by the voices of persons secreted in the trees. Being a high point of land, Deucalion here saved himself from the general deluge, stated to have occurred one thousand five hundred and forty-eight years before Christ. In token of gratitude he there erected a building to Jupiter, said to have been the first temple in Greece. The oracles were delivered by a priestess, whom

Herodotus supposes to have been carried away from a temple in Egypt.

Oracles were generally given in very confused and unintelligible language. They often remained unsolved until a long time after, when some event occurred, which was ingeniously explained to have fulfilled them. Sometimes they were so worded that they could be understood one way as well as another. Thus when Pyrrhus inquired whether he should be victorious, the reply was: "I declare, son of Æacus, you the Romans shall conquer." He thought it a favourable omen; but the Romans conquered him, and yet the event did not contradict the prediction. Of the true and clear responses, the most remarkable on record are the following. Croesus, wishing to ascertain which oracle was most deserving of confidence, sent messengers into seven different states, with orders that on the same day of the month they should each ask the chief oracle of the place what Croesus was then doing, and send him word what answers they received. In order to be employed in a manner least likely to be conjectured, he cut in pieces a tortoise and a lamb, and boiled them together in a covered vessel of brass. The answers were all unsatisfactory, except the oracle of Apollo at Delphi. The Pythia replied:

"I count the sand, I measure out the sea;  
The silent and the dumb are heard by me.  
E'en now the odours to my sense that rise,  
A tortoise boiling with a lamb supplies,  
Where brass below and brass above it lies."

An oracle at Butis told Cambyses he would die in Ecbatana. Supposing it to mean a great city of that name in Media, he carefully avoided the place. Some years after, when he was suffering from a wound, he dismounted from his horse to rest in a village of Assyria. Feeling that he must die there, he inquired the name of the place, and they told him it was Ecbatana. The prophecy was fulfilled.

Priests took advantage of the general faith in oracles,

and allowed no one to consult them without expensive sacrifices and rich presents. In some places, applicants slept in the temple, and priests interpreted what the gods said to them in dreams. On such occasions, they used a pillow of laurel leaves; for that was universally called "the prophetic plant." Prophets always carried a staff of laurel wood. Sometimes Sibylline verses were written on scraps of paper, shaken in a vessel, and taken out by lot. Sometimes they opened the poems of Hesiod, or Homer, and accepted as a prediction the first verse they glanced at. They had innumerable omens. When a person sneezed, it was customary to say: "The gods bless you!" A sneeze on the left hand was unlucky. A sneeze on Xenophon's right hand, while he was making a speech, was thought a sufficient reason why he should command the army. Certain days were considered so unlucky, that Augustus Cæsar would never go out when they occurred, or consent to begin any important undertaking. Priests learned in the arts of divination were called Augurs. They predicted future events from the course of the lightning, the actions of birds and bees, and the appearance of the entrails in animals offered for sacrifice. Birds, flying about everywhere, were supposed to have universal knowledge of the affairs of men; hence their cries and manner of flight were considered ominous. This idea rendered people cautious what they said before a bird; and is, perhaps, the origin of our saying: "A bird of the air may carry it." One of the most important offices of the Augurs was to select a fortunate day for battle. There was always an altar for worship in the centre of the camp, and a coop of sacred chickens. If the chickens refused to eat, it was a bad omen; if they ate freely, it was propitious. Once when they refused food, Publius Claudius ordered them to be thrown into the water; saying, with a sneer: "Let them drink, since they will not eat." But his fleet being captured soon after, he lamented his rashness with many tears; for the people considered his impiety the cause of their calamities. When the army of Marcus Aurelius was perishing with thirst, the



priests were summoned to utter conjurations and perform ceremonies to procure rain. A refreshing shower, which soon followed, was considered an answer to their prayers. The augurs were consulted both on public and private occasions, and their counsels had great influence in the state. It was very common to impute national calamities to some neglect of the Auspices. Other priests could be condemned for offences, but no augur could be removed from office, though convicted of the most flagrant crimes. The greatest generals and statesmen were proud of belonging to their sacred order. Pompey and Cicero were augurs; and the latter confesses that the supreme object of his wishes was attained by the appointment.

Numerous miracles are recorded in the annals of Greece and Rome. They were believed by many intelligent and learned persons, and were received as religious truth by the populace. Pausanias, the Roman historian, says that in the temple of Æsculapius, at Epidaurus, were many columns inscribed with the names of men and women cured by the god. One of the pillars was erected in commemoration of Hippolytus, who had been raised from the dead. Strabo says the temples were full of tablets describing miraculous cures. One of these tablets, found in the temple of Æsculapius, on the island of the Tiber, at Rome, gives an account of two blind men restored to sight, in view of a multitude of people, who with loud acclamations acknowledged the power of the god. The temples of that deity were always thronged with the diseased, imploring assistance, and the cured presenting offerings. It was very common to remain lying prostrate in the temple all night, expecting medicines to be prescribed in dreams. It was believed that Æsculapius himself sometimes appeared and conversed with those who devoutly sought his aid. Cicero says: "Time wears away opinions founded on fictions, but confirms the dictates of nature. Whence it is, both among us and other nations, that sacred institutions and divine worship of the gods have been increased and refined, from time to time. This is not to be imputed to chance, or folly

but to the frequent appearance of the gods themselves. Their voices have been often heard, and they have appeared in forms so visible, that he who doubts it must be hardened in stupidity or impiety." Dionysius of Halicarnassus, one of the most accurate historians of antiquity, says: "In the war with the Latins, Castor and Pollux appeared visibly on white horses, and fought on the side of the Romans, who by their assistance gained a complete victory. As a perpetual memorial of it, a temple was erected, and a yearly festival instituted in honour of those deities." The emperor Julian declared that he had familiar intercourse with divine beings. They woke him from slumber, by touching his hand or his hair, and he knew them so well, that he could instantly distinguish their voices and their forms. Homer has recorded that the horse of Achilles spoke to him, professed to see Apollo, and told his master that he would soon be killed.

In the early rude times of Greece, they had neither statues nor temples, but only upright stones, or wooden blocks, with the name of some deity inscribed thereon. To these were added simple altars of turf or stone, over which small chapels were first erected, and afterwards, temples. Mountains, groves, and grottoes, were all favourite places of worship. In a dark rocky ravine, overshadowed by gloomy groves and frowning crags, was a deep subterranean recess, called the cave of Trophonius. Oracles were uttered there, whence worshippers always returned very pale and dejected; doubtless owing to the chemical properties of the atmosphere. On the southern slope of Mount Hymettus is a grotto hung with stalactites. Engraved on a rock at the entrance, is an inscription in verse, announcing that Arche-demus, a native of Thessaly, formed this cave by counsel of the Nymphs. In the interior, his figure may still be seen rudely sculptured on the rock, in his shepherd's frock, with a hammer and chisel in his hand. Various inscriptions are scattered about, one of which speaks of a garden planted there in honour of the Nymphs. In ancient times, when the poetic faith of Greece was living in the souls of

men, this place was filled with images of sylvan deities, and the walls covered with votive offerings, shepherds' pipes and reeds, basins of stone, and wooden cups carved with animals and flowers. Here the peasants brought oblations of their first flowers, grapes, and sheaves of grain. This is supposed to be the grotto where Plato, when a young child, was led by his parents with offerings to Pan, the Nymphs, and the Pastoral Apollo, to whom the place was consecrated. While they sacrificed, the boy slept on the grass, and bees left honey on his mouth, which was considered a presage of his future eloquence.

All high places were sacred to some deity. Mount Helicon, covered with fresh rills and flowery glades, was consecrated to the Muses, whose graceful statues stood in the shady recesses of its many groves. There welled the sacred fount of Aganippe, round which they danced, and the clear spring of Hippocrene, in which they bathed. Consecrated groves abounded everywhere, with marble statues of the gods gleaming among their foliage. They were supposed to be a favourite resort for Dryads, Fauns, Satyrs, and other sylvan deities, often seen dancing under the trees; a poetic way of accounting for the flickering play of sunshine and shadow. Religious ceremonies were often solemnized in groves, which on such occasions were hung with so many garlands, bouquets, and various offerings to the gods, that light was almost excluded.

The difference between Egyptian and Grecian character was strongly marked on their temples and statues. Instead of huge piles of granite, hewn into heavy forms, and enveloped in subterranean gloom, temples of pure white marble stood in Doric majesty on the summit of Grecian hills, overlooking a broad expanse of waters; or in the bosom of sunny valleys gracefully rose the slender columns of Ionian architecture. No law of limitation confined the Grecian artist to stiff attitudes and monotonous repose. Genius, left free to express itself, proved its own divinity in the creation of divine forms. It had no need to represent omnipotence by the clumsy contrivance of many heads

and arms. It put power *in* the statue; made it breathe from the godlike countenance, and bound in graceful motions. Of all their conceptions none was more beautiful than their image of Apollo, the Intellectual Spirit of the Sun, eagerly and gracefully springing forward, in the full vigour of immortal youth, leading the planets through the mazes of their heavenly dance to the music of his golden lyre. No wonder that the untutored minds of Greece, gazing reverently on those statues, should find it easy to believe that Celestial Spirits, descended from the stars, dwelt therein, and irradiated the divine forms with their own immortal life.

The material employed was worthy of the beautiful ideal embodied. Greece was rich in quarries of finest marble, susceptible of exquisite polish. Ivory and gold were often intermixed, and sometimes statues were made of pure gold, adorned with precious gems. The images of pastoral deities were generally cut from citron, olive, ebony, and other durable kinds of wood.

It was a common opinion that some of the gods peculiarly delighted in mountains, others in forests, valleys, fields, or rivers; and it was customary to build temples in places supposed to be most agreeable to the deities who were to inhabit them. The people considered them a blessing wherever they stood, and thought they owed health and abundant harvests to their protecting influence. In cities, they built temples near common houses, but elsewhere they sought for the loveliest and most secluded places, and generally surrounded them with stately groves. The ground was previously consecrated with many prayers and ceremonies, and sprinkled with holy water. Temples always faced the east, to receive the rays of the rising sun. They contained an outer court for the public, and an inner sanctuary for the priests, called the *Adytum*. Near the entrance was a large vessel of stone or brass, filled with water, made holy by plunging into it a burning torch from the altar. All who were admitted to the sacrifices were sprinkled with this water, and none but the unpolluted



were allowed to pass beyond it. In the centre of the building stood the statue of the god on a pedestal raised above the altar and enclosed by a railing. On festival occasions, the people brought laurel, olive, or ivy, to decorate the pillars and walls. Before they entered, they always washed their hands as a type of purification from sin. A story is told of a man who was struck dead by a thunderbolt because he omitted this ceremony when entering a temple of Jupiter. Sometimes they crawled up the steps on their knees, and bowing their heads to the ground, kissed the threshold. Always when they passed one of these sacred edifices they kissed their right hand to it, in token of veneration. All classes, including foreigners and slaves, were free to enter, either from curiosity or devotion; but it was ordained that no unclean action should be committed within the consecrated precincts. There was a law that no person should be forced away from the altars or statues, or be subject to any violence there; and it was believed that such an action would bring down certain vengeance from the gods. The princess Laodamia fled to Diana's altar for protection, during a sedition of the people, and was killed in the tumult. A terrible famine and civil wars followed, which were all attributed to this circumstance. The institution was intended to protect abused slaves and persecuted debtors; but in process of time all sorts of knaves and criminals took refuge in the temples, and no authority could expel them. The evil finally became so great, that only one or two were allowed to be places of protection for offenders, and those under certain regulations.

Each deity had consecrated plants and animals, often represented near them in the sculptures and paintings. The oak and eagle were sacred to Jupiter, the owl and olive to Minerva, the swan and laurel to Apollo. Serpents were often introduced in connection with Apollo and Æsculapius; they were twined round the rod of Mercury, and sometimes lay at the foot of Minerva's spear. A large serpent was kept in the citadel at Athens, to which they every month offered cakes of honey. The pomegranate, which

Hindoo Siva carries as a symbol of his reproducing power, was placed in the hands of the dead on Grecian monuments, as a sign that they would live again. A butterfly emerging from its chrysalis is often represented on such monuments, as a type of transmigration, which they called metempsychosis, or change of soul.

Among the innumerable temples of Greece, the most beautiful was the Parthenon, meaning the Temple of the Virgin Goddess. It was a magnificent Doric edifice, dedicated to Minerva, the presiding deity of Athens. It was surrounded by three rows of stately columns of pure Pentelic marble, and, standing on the highest eminence in the city, it was seen from afar relieved against the clear blue sky. The eastern front was covered with figures sculptured in bold relief, representing Jupiter in the centre, and a procession of the gods following the car of Minerva to his throne. On either side was represented the Panathenaic pomp of Athenian citizens carrying offerings in solemn procession to the altar of their patron goddess. The figures were relieved by a groundwork of painting in metallic colours; rich purple, bright azure, glowing red, and brilliant sea-green. Wreaths of honeysuckle and festoons of gold adorned the cornice. "This profusion of vivid colours threw around the fabric a joyful and festive beauty, harmonizing admirably with the brightness and transparency of the atmosphere which encircled it." All the ornaments, within and without, were wrought with the exquisite finish of a cameo. Sculptured groups of deities and demi-gods, the most beautiful the world has ever seen, abounded everywhere. In the centre of the temple stood the celebrated colossal statue of Minerva in full armour, by Phidias. It was sixty feet high, made of ivory and gold. The amount of six hundred thousand dollars in gold was taken from the public treasury for its completion. The offerings in this temple were of immense value. Statues without number, superb paintings, golden vases, golden shields, splendid armour taken in war, lyres of ivory inlaid with gold, golden wreaths of victory, golden medals and

rings. It was sixteen years from the commencement to the completion of this superb structure. Every Athenian was eager to have some share in the glorious work. The women embroidered rich veils for the statues, the wealthy gave their gold, the artists their genius, the labourers their strength. Even the animals which dragged the marble from the quarry were honoured for the service, and a law was passed that the best pastures around the city should thenceforth be reserved for them.

In Athens also was a magnificent temple to Jupiter, half a mile in circuit. It was supported by one hundred and twenty marble columns, richly sculptured, sixty feet high, and six in diameter.

The temple of Diana at Ephesus was one of the most superb edifices ever dedicated to any form of worship. It was four hundred and twenty-five feet long and two hundred broad, supported by one hundred and twenty-seven marble columns, lofty and beautiful. The interior was ornamented with innumerable statues and paintings from the best Grecian masters, and the amount of wealth in votive offerings could hardly be calculated. All the nations of Asia Minor contributed to its erection, and were employed two hundred and twenty years in its completion. Diana was there worshipped as the Goddess of Fruitful Nature, as Isis was in Egypt. The amulets and talismans consecrated by the priests were in great demand.

In the territory of Elis was a temple containing a colossal statue of Olympian Jupiter, by Phidias. It was sixty feet high, and reckoned one of the wonders of the world. It was formed of ivory, crowned with a golden wreath, and adorned with a mantle of beaten gold, which fell in ample folds from the waist to the feet. In his right hand was a statue of the Goddess of Victory, likewise made of ivory and gold. The left hand held a sceptre richly adorned, and surmounted by a golden eagle. The expression of the countenance was serene, benevolent, and godlike in its majesty.

One of the most renowned edifices consecrated to this

form of worship, was built by the Macedonian kings in Syria. It was called Apollo Daphnæus, because it was intended to commemorate Apollo's love for the beautiful nymph Daphne, who, it is said, was here changed into a tree of laurel. The capacious sanctuary was almost filled by a colossal statue of the god, wrought with the most perfect skill of Grecian art, and enriched with gold and gems. He was slightly bending forward, to pour a libation on the earth, from a golden cup. The temple was embosomed in thick, impenetrable groves of laurel and cypress, which reached as far as a circumference of ten miles, and "suffered not the Sun to kiss their mother Earth." Within the enclosures were gardens filled with flowers, whose fragrance floated through the balmy air, mingled with soft strains of seducing music. Many streams of pure water flowed from the hills; one of them was supposed to be derived from the same source as the Castalian Spring at Delphos, and to be endowed with the same prophetic power. The emperor Adrian is said to have read the history of his future fortunes on a leaf dipped in these waters. The grounds were enlarged and beautified by successive emperors, and every generation added something to the splendour of the temple. For many centuries it was visited by crowds of worshippers, both natives and foreigners. But soldiers and philosophers, who dreaded to lose their reputation by becoming effeminate, generally avoided those cool and shady groves, it being considered impossible for human nature to resist the voluptuous and seductive influences of a place so expressly consecrated to love.

In Athens was a large edifice called the Pantheon, because it contained statues of all the gods. One on the same model, and with the same name, was afterward built at Rome. That city alone was said to contain a thousand temples. Every part of Greece abounded with monuments of religious reverence. Gracefully ornamented, or severely simple in their grandeur, they crowned every city, gleamed through the foliage of every valley, and often on the



summit of solitary hills refreshed the traveller with a vision of unexpected beauty.

The spirit of freedom, conspicuous in poetry and the arts, manifested itself in all forms of thought. Theories of God and the soul escaped from the locks and keys of priests into the minds of philosophers, who lectured upon them openly, excited other minds to investigation, and led the way to general discussion. The world was beginning to pass out of the age of childhood, which receives unquestioning all it is taught. It was entering the age of youthful, inquiring intellect, poetic, erratic, allured by castles in the air, but eager, buoyant, and free. These teachers of the people, not included in the priesthood, differed much in doctrines and character. The earliest of them taught the old Braminical idea that God and Nature were eternally one; and that by an inherent necessity, without any exertion of the will, material forms must at certain times be evolved by energy of the Divine Spirit indwelling in Nature, like the soul in the human body. Others, like the Hindoo rationalists, maintained that God and Nature were eternally two distinct principles, differing entirely in essence, and forever opposed to each other. Some believed there was a Central Soul diffused throughout the universe, the original cause of all things. Others denied any Primary Intelligence, and said Nature existed by an accidental collision and combination of atoms. Some said the universe had always existed, and would forever remain as it was. Others believed that deluges and conflagrations destroyed the earth at long intervals, returning as regularly as summer and winter; that all the forms of nature were renewed by energy of the indwelling Divine Soul, and so would be dissolved and renewed forever; that at every renovation the first race of men would be innocent and happy, and gradually degenerate more and more to the end. Some philosophers were absorbed in scientific studies and abstract metaphysical questions. Others renounced all science and speculative philosophy as useless and troublesome, and attended solely to the inculcation of

moral habits and proper manners. Some held that pleasure was the object of existence, and wisdom valuable only because it taught the means of rational enjoyment. Others relied entirely on the sufficiency of virtue to happiness, preached stoical submission to irresistible fate, said pain was no evil, and suicide, under some circumstances, a noble action. Some delighted in harmonious sounds, graceful forms, and rich clothing, believing that cultivated taste and love of beauty helped to elevate the moral character. Others held all external advantages in contempt, practised rigid abstinence, wore coarse clothing, and carried a wallet to beg for daily bread. One class prided themselves on proving that nothing could be proved; that there was no such thing as good or evil, truth or falsehood, but everything was a matter of opinion.

Enlightened minds understood the numerous deities symbolically, and regarded them merely as names of various effects produced by One Great Cause. Employed in upper ether, it was Jupiter; in the lower atmosphere, Juno; in the sciences, Minerva; in the sun, Apollo; in the sea, Neptune. That which to us appears absurd in their mythological legends, they explained satisfactorily to themselves, by regarding them as allegories; a method universally employed by the human intellect when devoutly inclined to discover sacred meaning in incomprehensible traditions. Philosophers of all opinions conformed more or less to popular observances; partly from the hold which the religion of one's age and country generally keeps upon the soul, and partly from motives of personal safety; for the priests, who lived by offering prayers and sacrifices for the people, were naturally very jealous of any teaching that lessened the importance of prescribed ceremonies. That some of the philosophers looked very sceptically upon their religious rites, may be readily conjectured. When Crates asked Stilpo whether he thought the gods took pleasure in the honours paid to them by mortals, he replied: "You fool, do not question me upon such subjects in the public streets, but when we are alone." The friends of Diagoras

showed him many votive tablets suspended in the temples by those who had escaped dangerous storms at sea. He replied: "I see the offerings of those who were saved, but where is the record of those who were wrecked, notwithstanding their supplications to the deities?" Protagoras began a treatise with these words: "Concerning the gods, I am unable to arrive at any knowledge whether they exist or not; for there are many impediments to our knowledge; especially the shortness and uncertainty of human life." The Athenians considered this sentiment so impious, that they banished the writer, and ordered his books to be burned in the market-place.

The celebrity of Egypt drew thither the inquiring minds of Greece, both in her ancient and modern times. In later ages, they came directly in contact with Oriental philosophers and devotees. Alexander the Great, in his Asiatic expedition, was attended by Grecian philosophers, some of whom he sent to hold conferences with the wise men of the East, particularly the Persian Magi, and the Bramins of India. The continual communication between India and Egypt by commerce, through the city of Alexandria, tended to spread a knowledge of the East among the Greeks. Their later writers mention East Indian and Ethiopian devotees, whom they describe as Gymnosophists, which means naked philosophers. They speak of them as divided into two sects, Brahmans and Sarmans, both of whom refrained from animal food, practised great austerities, and sought to unite themselves with Deity by constant meditation and complete subjugation of the senses. One of them wandered as far as Athens, where he voluntarily burned himself to death, to purify his soul from all connection with matter. Another did the same in the presence of Alexander's army. Being asked by the emperor whether he wished to say anything before he died, he replied: "I shall see you again shortly." This answer made a great impression, for it was generally believed that at the approach of death the soul could converse with

Spirits, and was gifted with prophecy ; a belief strengthened by the fact that Alexander died soon after.

The earliest of the Grecian teachers of whom we have any record is Orpheus. The general testimony is, that he was a native of Thrace, who, some twelve hundred years before Christ, founded a colony in Greece, and spent most of his life there. Being well acquainted with the religious tenets and ceremonies of his own country, he travelled into Egypt, where he obtained some knowledge of their religious mysteries, and became skilful in music, poetry, philosophy, astrology, and medicine. Thus accomplished, he returned to the Greeks, who were at that time in such a rude condition, that any man of moderate attainments would have seemed a prodigy. Accordingly, he became as famous among them as was Hermes among the Egyptians. It was said his music allured birds, tamed wild beasts, calmed whirlwinds, and drew rocks and trees after him. When his wife Eurydice died, he descended to Tartarus, charmed by his music the three-headed dog that guarded its gates, melted the heart of grim Pluto, and obtained leave to have his beloved wife follow him back to earth, provided he did not look behind him till he arrived in upper air ; but, in his eagerness to see Eurydice, he looked too soon, and she disappeared for ever. It has been suggested that this merely signified his great skill in medicine, whereby he rescued his wife from dangerous illness, and afterward lost her by a relapse. He brought from Egypt the doctrine that stars were animated by Spirits, and the world hatched from a mundane egg by rays of the sun. He taught that there was One invisible God, who contained within himself the germ of all things, and was alternately active and passive. In his active state, successive grades of beings emanated from him, by virtue of an inherent necessity ; all partook of his divine nature in different degrees, and all would return to him after progressive purifications. The universe would be destroyed by fire, and renewed. He is said to have been the first who taught the Greeks that the soul lived after death, and would suffer or be rewarded ac-



according to deeds done in the body. It is recorded that he introduced a triform image of Deity. It was a Serpent, with the head of a Lion, the head of a Bull, and in the centre the head of a majestic Man, with golden wings upon its shoulders.

The following are among the recorded maxims of Orpheus: "There is One Unknown Being, prior to all beings, and exalted above all. He is the author of all things, even of the ethereal sphere, and of all things below it. He is Life, Counsel, and Light, which three names all signify One Power, the same that drew all things visible and invisible out of nothing. We will sing that eternal, wise, and all-perfect Love, which reduced the chaos into order."

"The empyrean, the deep Tartarus, the earth, the ocean, the immortal gods and goddesses, all that is, all that has been, and all that will be, was originally contained in the fruitful bosom of Jupiter. He is the first and the last, the beginning and the end. All beings derive their origin from him. He is the Primeval Father, the immortal virgin, the life, the cause, the energy of all things. There is One only Power, One only Lord, One Universal King."

"Souls are in this world as a punishment for sins committed in a pre-existent state. The body is a prison, wherein the soul is kept till its faults are expiated."

The next celebrated teachers were the Seven Wise Men of Greece; among whom the most conspicuous was Thales, about six hundred years before Christ. According to the general custom, he went to Egypt in search of wisdom, and is said to have spent several years in intercourse with the learned priests. He seems to have carried knowledge with him, for he taught them how to measure the height of the pyramids by their shadow at noon; a process previously unknown to their mathematicians. After his return, he foretold a celebrated eclipse, which happened as predicted. By astronomical calculations, he likewise foresaw that a certain year would be uncommonly productive, and he bought up all the olives in the neighbourhood before their season. The crops proved very abundant, and he

made large profits; but he assembled the neighbouring traders and voluntarily divided with them. The following are recorded among his sayings:

"The most ancient of all things is God, for he is uncreated."

"The universe is the beautiful work of God."

"Be careful not to do that yourself, which you would blame in another."

"True happiness consists in perfect health, a moderate fortune, and a life free from effeminacy and ignorance."

"In misfortune it may be some consolation to learn that our tormentors are as unhappy as ourselves;" a maxim in which he certainly did not rise above the level of his age. He maintained that death does not differ from life; that one is the same as the other. Being asked if a man could conceal evil actions from the gods, he replied: "How can actions be concealed, when even our most secret thoughts are known to them?"

Pittacus, another of the wise men, said: "Do not that to your neighbour, which you would take ill from him."

"Speak evil of no one; not even of your enemies."

Bias said: "If you are handsome, do handsome things; if deformed, supply the defects of nature by your virtues."

"Whatever good you do, ascribe it to the gods."

Pythagoras, one of the most celebrated of the ancients, is supposed to have been born about five hundred and eighty-six years before Christ. There are many stories of his having visited wise men of different countries, but some of them are positively contradicted by dates. One fact, as reliable as anything we can learn from ancient history, is that he went into Egypt, carrying an introduction from the king of Samos to Amasis, king of Egypt, who was a great patron of learned men, and particularly partial to Grecians. Amasis requested the priests of Heliopolis to instruct him in the mysteries, but their aversion to admit a foreigner was so strong, that they evaded the royal recommendation by advising him to go to the college at Memphis, because it was of greater antiquity. When he arrived there, the

same pretext was used to dismiss him to Thebes. The Theban priests, unwilling to refuse the express wish of their king, and yet reluctant to grant it, ordained such troublesome and severe ceremonies of admission as they thought would discourage the importunate stranger. But so great was his eagerness for knowledge, that he patiently endured all they required, though he nearly lost his life in the process. He is said to have passed twenty-two years in Egypt, during which he became familiar with their most learned priests, and perfect master of their three styles of writing, the common, the hieroglyphic, and the sacerdotal. He returned to his own country at the age of forty, and soon after established a school of philosophy in that part of Italy called Magna Grecia, on account of the number of Grecians settled there. He is said to have been beautiful and majestic beyond all the men of his time. He used to wear a long white robe, and a flowing beard; some say, a golden crown on his head. He preserved great gravity and dignity of demeanour, and had such command of himself that it is said his countenance was never seen to express grief, joy, or anger. He confined himself to frugal vegetable diet, and rejected pulse and beans. He was much influenced by music, and often sang hymns from Hesiod, Homer, and Thales, to preserve the tranquillity of his mind. He was opposed to the sacrifice of animals, and worshipped at an altar which had never been polluted with blood. Seeing a large draught of fishes in a net, he is reported to have purchased them, and put them back into the sea, as a lesson of humanity. Deeming it irreverent to invoke the deities by name, he advised his disciples, when they wished to asseverate very solemnly, to swear by the number four; in which, for certain mysterious reasons, he believed the perfection of the soul consisted. He was married and had sons, but taught, very strictly, the union of one man with one woman only. Before his time, it was usual to call a teacher a sage, signifying a wise man; but he called himself by the new name of philosopher, a lover of wisdom, saying: "There is none wise but

God." People of all classes flocked to hear him, and listened with the greatest reverence. The Crotonians urged him to preside over their senate, consisting of a thousand men. Wherever his teachings prevailed, sobriety and temperance displaced licentiousness and luxury. He had two methods of teaching, one public and the other private. His public teaching consisted principally of practical morals, such as respect to parents and magistrates, conformity to the laws and customs of one's country, strict regard to truth, and worship of the gods by simple offerings and with purity of heart. He gave rational maxims concerning the union of the sexes and birth of children. He taught that it was a wrong done to offspring when parents indulged in licentiousness, or ate or drank to excess, or partook of unwholesome food; that it was a duty to avoid everything which might render children otherwise than healthy, vigorous, and well formed. He exerted his influence to suppress wars and quarrels. He used to say, we ought to wage war only against ignorance of the mind, passions of the heart, distempers of the body, sedition in cities, and ill will in families. He attached mystical significance to numbers, especially three, and three times three. When speaking of God and the soul, instead of words, he often made use of figures, which were incomprehensible to all but the initiated. This was perhaps done to avoid alarming popular prejudices. To his private school only a select body of disciples were admitted, after careful observation of their countenances, characters and manners, and a strict probationary discipline. They were required to eat no animal food, and drink only water, except a very small portion of wine measured out to them in the evening. They must be inured to fatigue, sleep little, dress very simply, never return reproaches for reproaches, but bear contradiction or ridicule with the utmost humility. An initiatory silence of two years, sometimes of five, was enjoined, to cure them of conceit and loquacity. During these years of probation, they were only permitted to hear his teachings through a curtain. Those who had



patience to pass through the ordeal were at last admitted to the inner school, and received a full explanation of doctrines which were taught to others obscurely, under a veil of symbols. When admitted into his band of brethren, they put all their possessions into a common stock, to be distributed by proper officers, as occasion might require. They took an oath never to reveal the doctrines of their master beyond the limits of their own sect. If any one became discontented and wished to withdraw, he was dismissed with twice as much as he had put into the treasury, a tomb was erected to his memory, and he was ever after considered among them as a dead man.

Marriage was permitted, but much restrained by law. It was allowable to have but one wife, to whom strict fidelity was required; and intercourse, except for the sake of offspring, was considered shameful. The Pythagorean brethren at Crotona, about six hundred in number, lived with their wives and children in a public building, where all the arrangements were on a perfect equality. Each day began with deliberation how it should be spent, and ended with a careful retrospect. They rose before the sun, that they might pay him homage; then they repeated select verses from Homer and other poets, and attuned their spirits with music, vocal and instrumental. Several hours were employed in study of the sciences; then there was an interval of leisure, usually spent in solitary walks and contemplation. The hour before dinner was devoted to athletic exercises. After they were initiated, they drank no wine, and their repast consisted chiefly of bread, honey, and water. The remainder of the day was devoted to civil and domestic affairs, conversation, bathing, and religious ceremonies. They had the utmost veneration for their master's oracular wisdom, and thought it sufficient to silence all doubts when they replied: "*He* has said it." They committed his sayings chiefly to memory, and if they ventured to use writing, they kept it carefully within their own limits. He and his disciples mutually exhorted each other not to divide asunder the God that was in them, but

be careful to preserve their union with God and one another. His delight in musical and mathematical studies led him to the idea that the spheres in which the planets move, striking upon ether as they pass, must produce sounds varying according to their magnitude and relative distance. This induced his disciples to say that he was the only mortal ever so favoured by the gods as to hear the music of the spheres. It is a singular coincidence that modern science expresses the intervals of music by precisely the same numbers that mark the distances of the planets.

Pythagoras taught that "there is One Universal Soul diffused through all things—eternal, invisible, unchangeable; in essence like truth, in substance resembling light; not to be represented by any image, to be comprehended only by the mind; not, as some conjecture, exterior to the world, but in himself entire, pervading the universal sphere." From this Soul proceeded three successive emanations of spiritual intelligences, which he calls Gods, Demons, and Heroes. Men and animals were likewise portions of the same Soul; the subtile ether assuming grosser clothing the farther it receded from its divine source. Therefore he refrained from killing or eating animals, because he considered them allied to men in their principle of life. Demons were Spirits, both good and evil, dispersed throughout the universe, causing sickness or health to man, and communicating knowledge of future events by dreams and modes of divination. Tradition asserts that Pythagoras himself professed to cure diseases by incantations, which cast out Evil Spirits. Heroes were defined to be "rational minds in luminous bodies;" a class of spirits intermediate between demons and human beings. Man, being allied with all things, the highest and the lowest, he conceived to be a microcosm, or compendium of the universe. He supposed him to be composed of three parts; a rational immortal mind, which is a portion of divinity, and seated in the brain; a sensitive irrational spirit, the seat of the passions, residing in the heart; and

a mortal body, assumed as a temporary garment. At death, the ethereal portion of man being freed from the chains of matter, was conducted by Hermes to the region of the dead, where it remained in a state according to its merits, until sent back to earth to inhabit some other body, human or animal. When sufficiently purified by successive probations, it ascended to a region of pure ether, above the atmosphere of this earth, among the stars, which he believed to be inhabited by Spirits. Finally, it returned to the Immortal Source whence it emanated.

Tradition reports that Pythagoras professed to have direct intercourse with the gods, by manifest visions, and to remember what bodies his own soul had previously animated. First, he was *Æthalides*, son of Hermes, and obtained from that god the gift of remembering all that might happen to him, whether in this life or after death. Then he was *Euphorbus*, and killed at the siege of Troy; then the prophet *Hermotimus*; then *Pyrrhus*, a fisherman at Delos; and lastly, Pythagoras. During these transmigrations, he occasionally passed into birds, and sometimes did penance in the lower regions for a season. He is said to have seen there *Hesiod* chained to a brazen pillar, and *Homer* hung on a tree, surrounded by serpents, as a punishment for degrading the character of the gods by poetic fictions. But Pythagoras, in common with all the wise men of ancient times, doubtless had many things imputed to him which he never said or did. The *Golden Verses*, ascribed to him, are generally supposed to have been written by some of his early followers, and to contain the summary of what he taught. The following are among his recorded sayings:

“Unity is the principle of all things, and from this unity went forth an infinite duality.”

“By our separation from God, we lost the wings which raised us toward celestial things, and were thus precipitated into this region of death, where all evils dwell. By putting away earthly affections and devoting ourselves to virtue, our wings will be renewed, and we shall rise to that

existence where we shall find the true good without any admixture of evil."

"The soul of man being between spirits who always contemplate the Divine Essence, and those who are incapable of contemplating it, can raise itself to the one, or sink itself to the other."

"Every quality, which a man acquires, originates a good or a bad Spirit, which abides by him in this world, and after death remains with him as a companion."

"Truth is to be sought with a mind purified from the passions of the body. Having overcome evil things, thou shalt experience the union of the immortal God with mortal man."

"Man is perfected first by conversing with gods, which he can only do when he abstains from evil, and strives to resemble divine natures; second, by doing good to others, which is an imitation of the gods; third, by leaving this mortal body."

"The noblest gifts of heaven to man, are to speak truth and do good offices. These two things resemble the works of God."

"The discourse of a philosopher is vain if no passion of a man is healed thereby."

"Strength of mind depends on sobriety, for this keeps reason unclouded by passion."

"Youth should be habituated to obedience, for it will then find it easy to obey the authority of reason."

"A man should never pray for anything for himself, because every one is ignorant of what is really good for him."

"Honour the gods, and revere an oath."

"Every man ought to act and speak with such integrity, that no one would have reason to doubt his simple affirmation."

"Do what you believe to be right, whatever people think of you; despise alike their censures or their praise."

"The rational mind of man is more excellent than his



sensitive soul, as the sun is more excellent than the stars."

The strong bonds that united the disciples of Pythagoras, and the secrecy they observed, excited jealousy; and he was accused of strengthening his influence from motives of political ambition. He fled from one place to another, to avoid his enemies. It is supposed that he finally took refuge in the Temple of the Muses, where, unknown to his friends, he died of starvation at eighty years of age. His followers took refuge in Egypt. They are said to have paid him divine honours after his death. In token of veneration, they always swore by his name when they wished to affirm very solemnly. He continued to have many followers for several centuries. Among other peculiarities, they sowed no beans, would not touch them, or pass through a field where they grew. His doctrines were much adulterated, and received many additions from those who succeeded him. Many marvellous traditions have been handed down by his admirers. They say that he had power over Evil Spirits; that he cured diseases miraculously; that he understood the language of animals; that by speaking a word, he tamed a ferocious Daunian bear, that had committed great ravages; and freed Italy from a venomous species of snake, which had long infested it; that he prevented an ox from eating beans by whispering in his ear, and caused an eagle to come down from the sky at his bidding; that he was seen and heard publicly discoursing in Italy and Sicily on the same day; that he correctly predicted storms and earthquakes, and truly foretold future events; that when he was crossing a river with his friends, the water called out: "Hail, Pythagoras!"

Among the many followers of Pythagoras, was a Sicilian named Empedocles. He inherited wealth, but devoted it chiefly to maintaining the rights of the people against tyranny, and bestowing marriage-dowries on poor girls. His knowledge of philosophy and the sciences gave him a reputation for miraculous power. He was said to have cured those whom no physician could save; to have restored to life a woman who had lain senseless thirty days; to have

checked by music the fury of a young man about to inflict instant death on his enemy; to have stopped epidemics, and driven away noxious winds. When he went to the Olympic games, the eyes of all people were fixed upon him, as if he were a supernatural being. It was reported, that one night, after a festival, he was visibly conveyed into the heavens, amid the radiance of celestial light. Others said he threw himself into the burning crater of *Ætna*, that the manner of his death might not be known, and that the volcano afterward threw out one of his brazen sandals. The third and most probable account is that he went into Greece and never returned. A statue was erected to his memory.

Anaxagoras, born five hundred years before Christ, travelled in Egypt, and in various parts of Greece, in pursuit of knowledge. He is supposed to have been the first among the Greeks, who conceived of God as a Divine Mind, entirely distinct from Matter, and acting upon it, not by blind inherent necessity, but with conscious intelligence and design in the formation and preservation of the universe. He taught that the sun was an inanimate fiery substance, and therefore not a proper object of worship. Eclipses were universally imputed to the immediate action of the gods, and when he attempted to explain them to the people by natural causes, he brought himself into great danger. On one occasion, he ridiculed some Athenian priests for predicting disasters from the unusual appearance of a ram with one horn. To convince the populace there was nothing supernatural in the affair, he opened the head of the animal and showed them it was so constructed as to prevent the growth of one horn. He paid the usual penalty for being more wise than the majority of contemporaries. He was accused of not believing in the gods, and was condemned to die; to which he answered very quietly: "That sentence was passed upon me before I was born." Pericles had been his pupil, and cherished great respect and affection for the good old man; but even his powerful influence scarcely availed to change the sentence of death into one

of banishment. He died in exile at Lampsacus, at the age of seventy-two. When he was dying, the senate sent messengers to inquire in what way they could most acceptably express their respect for his memory. He replied: "Let all the boys have a play-day on the anniversary of my death." His request was complied with, and the custom continued for several centuries.

Socrates, born four hundred and sixty-nine years before Christ, was a common citizen of Athens, who first served as a soldier, and afterward earned his living by making images. His excellent character and earnest desire for improvement attracted the attention of a wealthy man, who enabled him to receive instruction from the best teachers, in various branches. Having thus received knowledge, he wished to use it for the benefit of the public. But he established no school, and had no secret doctrines for the initiated only. Seeing the youth of Athens were becoming demoralized by luxury, and led astray by witty scoffers at all sacred things, he relinquished business, and devoted all his time to talking in the markets, workshops, or public walks, wherever he could get an audience to listen to him. With mechanics, sailors, artists, magistrates, and philosophers, he discoursed familiarly concerning moral principles, religious and social duties, or even the sciences, arts, or trades, in which they were engaged.

He had a large intellectual head, but his personal ugliness was a subject of jesting both with friends and enemies, who were wont to compare him, in that particular, with Silenus and the Satyrs. A physiognomist, who was unacquainted with him, declared that his countenance indicated a very immodest and corrupt nature. His disciples were much incensed at this declaration; but Socrates cooled their anger, by confessing that the stranger had rightly judged his natural propensities, which, however, he had brought under the control of reason. His constitution was so robust, that he endured hunger and cold with indifference. He was very abstemious in his diet; the same homely clothing served him for summer and winter; and he always

went barefoot, even when serving in the army amid the severe frosts of Thrace. He would never receive any pay for his instructions, and frequently refused rich presents, though urged to accept them. He passed his life in voluntary and contented poverty, sustained by a firm conviction that he was sent into the world to fulfil a special religious mission. He bore injuries with the greatest patience; and he not only treated insults with quiet indifference, but even felt a degree of compassion for those who were capable of bestowing them. His teaching was eminently moral in its character. He thought philosophers expended too much time and ingenuity in metaphysical arguments concerning the nature of God and the soul. On such high themes he deemed it becoming to speculate but little. Following the practical bias of his mind, he reasoned from external effects to spiritual causes.

He said to his hearers: "Reflect that your own mind directs your body by its volitions, and you must be convinced that the Intelligence of the Universe disposes all things according to his pleasure. Can you imagine that your eye is capable of discerning distant objects, and that the eye of God cannot at the same instant see all things? Or that while your mind can contemplate the affairs of distant countries, the Supreme Understanding cannot attend at once to all the affairs of the universe? Such is the nature of the Divinity, that he sees all things, hears all things, is everywhere present, and constantly superintends all things. He who disposes and directs the universe, the source of all that is fair and good, who amid successive changes preserves the course of nature unimpaired, and to whose laws all beings are subject, this Supreme Deity, though himself invisible, is manifestly seen in his magnificent operations. Learn then, from the things which are produced, to infer the existence of an invisible power, and to reverence the Divinity."

"If thou wouldst know what is the wisdom of the gods, and what their love is, render thyself deserving the communication of some of those divine secrets, which may not



be penetrated by man, and which are imparted to those alone who consult, adore, and obey the Deity. Then shalt thou understand that there is a Being, whose eye pierceth through all nature, and whose ear is open to every sound, extending through all space, pervading all time, and whose bounty and care can know no other bounds than those fixed by his own creation."

"The Deity sees and hears all things, is everywhere present, and takes care of all things. If men believed this, they would abstain from all base actions, even in private, being persuaded that nothing they did could be unknown to the gods."

"There is no better way to true glory, than to endeavour to be good, rather than *seem* so."

He inferred the immortality of the soul, from the fact that it gives life to the body; from the phenomena of dreaming; from the universal belief of former ages; and from the eternity of the Divine Being, to whom he believed the soul was allied by similarity of nature, not by a participation of his essence. He described the sufferings of the wicked by representing their souls as ulcerated and horribly diseased, and subject to fearful pains, occasioned by the vices of their bodies. The true interpreter of the will of Deity he considered to be a moral sense in man, which distinguishes between right and wrong. He thought it a duty for every one to perform religious rites according to the customs of his country. But he always declared that divine favours could not be purchased; they must be merited; and that could only be done by a blameless life, the truest and best manner of serving Deity. He disapproved of swearing by the gods, and thought the popular legends concerning them tended to produce irreverence. He inculcated the duty of prayer, and taught his disciples this simple form: "Father Jupiter, give us all good, whether we ask it or not; and avert from us all evil, though we do not pray thee to do so. Bless our good actions, and reward them with success and happiness." Plato, who was familiar with his habits, represents him as saying to Phœdrus, when

about to return home from an excursion: "Must we not offer up a prayer before we go?" And thus did the devout man pour forth his reverential feeling in the Grecian form: "O beloved Pan, and all ye gods whose dwelling is in this place, grant me to be beautiful in soul; and may all that I possess of outward things be at harmony with those within. Teach me to think wisdom the only riches; and give me only so much wealth as a good and holy man could manage and enjoy." Xenophon says: "He sacrificed on the public altars of the city, and often at his own house. He also practised divination in the most public manner." He himself asks: "Do I not believe, as well as others, that the sun and moon are gods? Do we not believe demons to be gods or sons of gods?" He often declared, with great solemnity, that the devotion of his time and talents to the instruction of others had been enjoined upon him "by the gods, by oracles, by *the* god, by dreams, and every other mode in which by divination they order things to be done."

He made frequent allusion to "a demon," who he says warned him what to avoid. This divine voice had accompanied him from his youth. It often forbade him to do things, but never prompted him to any particular action. Sometimes it made suggestions with regard to the conduct of others; and he declared that whenever, from this warning, he signified the will of the gods to any of his friends, he never found himself deceived. Plato represents him as saying, in conversation: "When I was about to cross the river, the usual demoniacal sign was given me; and whenever this takes place, it always prohibits me from accomplishing what I am about to do. In the present instance, I seemed to hear a certain voice, which would not suffer me to depart, till I had made an expiation; as if I had in some way offended a divine nature. I am therefore a prophet, though not a perfectly worthy one; but just such a one as a man who knows his letters indifferently well—merely sufficient for what concerns himself."

This "demon" of Socrates has greatly puzzled modern inquirers. Some have conjectured that he merely meant

the voice of conscience, or of reason, within his own soul. But we know from his own testimony, and from Xenophon, that he adopted the universal belief of his age concerning Spirits, who mediated between gods and men. Both Greeks and Romans believed in the Oriental doctrine, that every human being, as well as every other form of being, had an attendant Spirit, who introduced him into life, accompanied him through the whole course of it, and at death conducted him out of the world. The Genii of men were masculine, those of women were feminine. Some believed that each person had two; one bright and good, to whom he was indebted for the favourable events of life, the other black and evil, the cause of his misfortunes. Some supposed the same Genius was either white or black, friend or enemy, according to a person's behaviour. Hence it was a common caution: "Be careful not to incense thy Genius." "Be reconciled with thy Genius." The more perfect the friendship entertained by the Genius for the person under his protection, the greater was his happiness and good fortune. When a man died, this guardian returned to the Universal Source of Spirit, whence he had emanated. The Greeks, who always clothed abstract ideas in graceful forms, represented the Genius of Human Nature by statues of a beautiful youth, sometimes naked, with wings, sometimes wearing a wreath of flowers and a garment covered with stars. It seems very likely that "the demon" of the Athenian philosopher belonged to this class of beings. He himself never personified it, but always spoke of it as "a divine sign," or "supernatural voice."

Socrates was distinguished for cheerfulness, equability of temper, and the most inflexible integrity. He is reported to have had an extremely irritable wife, whose reproaches he bore with the utmost patience. He twice served in the councils of state, and several times in the army. He was so universally honoured, that the most distinguished citizens of Athens constituted themselves his stewards, and sent him provisions as they thought he needed, in order that he might devote himself entirely to

public instruction. He took what necessity required, and returned the remainder. Xenophon says of him: "He was so pious, that he undertook nothing without asking counsel of the gods; so just, that he never did the smallest injury to any one, but rendered essential services to many; so temperate, that he never preferred pleasure to virtue; and so wise, that he was able, even in the most difficult cases, to judge what was expedient and right." His manner of discoursing in public seems to have produced a powerful effect on his hearers. The wealthy and dashing Alcibiades said of him: "No mortal speech has ever excited in my mind such emotions as are kindled by this magician. My heart leaps like an inspired Corybant. My inmost soul is stung by his words, as by the bite of a serpent. It is indignant at its own rude and ignoble character. I often weep tears of regret to think how vain and inglorious is the life I lead. Nor am I the only one that weeps like a child and despairs of himself; many others are affected in the same way."

When Socrates was sixty-three years old, he was chosen member of the senate, and carried into political life the same firmness and honesty that had marked his character in all other relations with his fellow men. He incurred great unpopularity, and some personal hazard, by refusing to obey orders that he deemed unjust, or to put to vote an unconstitutional question. His diligence and directness in contending against all pretension and false appearances likewise made him many enemies among artful and conceited men. Notwithstanding his wisdom and his virtues, he was summoned before the tribunal of Five Hundred, to answer the charge of corrupting the youth of Athens, of despising the tutelary deities of the state, and teaching the worship of new divinities, not sanctioned by law. Lysias, one of the most celebrated orators of the age, composed an eloquent speech in his defence, but the philosopher declined his assistance, declaring to his judges that "the Divine Voice" had forbidden him to make any defence; and that not only once, but twice. In an address to them,



distinguished for simplicity and earnestness, he confessed that he knew nothing, but he said it had always been his wish to promote the welfare and happiness of his fellow citizens; that whatever he possessed had always been devoted to their service; that he fulfilled this duty by special command of the gods; he added, emphatically, "whose authority I regard more than I do yours." He was condemned by a majority of six votes. When requested, according to custom, to choose what death he would die, he would not consent to any greater punishment than a fine, on the security of Plato and other friends. Instead of acknowledging himself guilty, or seeking to excite compassion, he said: "For my efforts to teach the young men of Athens justice and moderation, I better deserve to be maintained at the public expense, than do the victors in the Olympic Games; for they make their countrymen more happy in appearance, while I have made them so in reality." This coolness and dignity of deportment offended the judges, and they condemned him to drink poison, by a majority of eighty. He received the sentence with perfect equanimity. After a short speech, in which he commended his children to the care of the senate, he concluded by saying: "In death we either lose all consciousness, or, as it is said, go into some other place. If so, it will be much better; for we shall then be out of the power of partial judges, and come before those who are impartial."

An embassy was annually sent to the sacred island of Delos, the birthplace of Apollo, and no one was allowed to be put to death till the vessel returned, and the solemnities of the Delian Festival were concluded. As the condemnation of Socrates occurred at that time, he remained thirty days chained in prison. His friends urged him to escape, and one of them bribed the jailer for that purpose. But he declined to avail himself of the opportunity thus offered, saying, with his usual pleasantry: "Where can I fly, to avoid the irrevocable doom passed on all mortals?" His friends and disciples were with him almost constantly. He talked calmly and cheerfully with them concerning the ex-

istence and destiny of the soul. When one of them wept that he, being so innocent, should be condemned to die, he replied: "What then, would you have me die guilty?" A few hours before his death, he said to those around him: "I must die, while you continue in life. The gods alone can tell which is to be preferred, for in my opinion no man can know." To one who doubted the existence of Deity he said: "O Aristodemus, apply yourself sincerely to worship God. He will enlighten you, and then all your doubts will be removed." After drinking the poison, he said: "It would be inexcusable in me thus to despise death, if I were not persuaded that it will conduct me into the presence of the gods, who are most righteous governors, and into the society of just and good men; but I derive confidence from the hope that something of man remains after death, and that the condition of good men will then be much better than that of the bad." Again he said: "The soul, which cannot die, merits all the moral and intellectual improvement we can possibly give it. A spirit formed to live forever should be making continual advances in virtue and wisdom. To a well cultivated mind the body is merely a temporary prison. At death, such a soul is conducted by its invisible guardian to the heights of empyrean felicity, where it becomes a fellow commoner with the wise and good of all ages." When Crito asked in what manner he wished to be buried, he replied, with a smile: "Any way you please, provided I do not escape out of your hands." Then, turning to his other friends, he asked: "Is it not strange, after all I have said to convince you I am going to the society of the happy, that Crito still thinks this body to be Socrates? Let him dispose of my lifeless corpse as he pleases, but let him not mourn over it, as if *that* were Socrates." A few moments before he expired, he reminded Crito not to forget to sacrifice a cock, which he had vowed to Æsculapius. He died in the seventieth year of his age. The tidings of his death occasioned such general indignation throughout the states of Greece, that the Athenians became

thoroughly ashamed, and manifested their repentance by a decree of public mourning and the erection of a statue to his memory.

Plato, born four hundred and twenty-nine years before Christ, was a pupil of Socrates. When his father first conducted him to the school, the teacher was just saying that he dreamed a young swan flew from the altar of Eros and alighted on his lap, whence he soared singing into the air, alluring all who heard his high sweet voice. Plato entered while he spoke, and he said: "Behold the swan!" This illustrious pupil was accused of preferring metaphysical speculations, and the mysteries of Egypt, to the plain practical wisdom of his master, for whom, however, he had great reverence. His own soul was of another mould. It was essentially poetic, and gave that tinge to everything it touched. After the death of Socrates, he went to Magna Grecia and staid some time with the followers of Pythagoras, of whom he is said to have purchased some of his recorded opinions at a high price. He afterward went to Egypt, where he spent thirteen years at the most celebrated priestly schools. He is supposed to have been more than forty years old when he returned to Athens, and opened a school of philosophy in the beautiful grove of Academus, shaded by lofty plane trees, intersected by a gentle stream, and adorned with temples and statues. In the midst of his fame, he evinced as much desire to learn of others, as to teach. One of his friends, observing this, asked him how long he intended to be a scholar. He replied: "As long as I am not ashamed to grow wiser and better." He adopted the Egyptian fashion of concealing his opinions on spiritual subjects; partly, perhaps, because he was warned by the fate of Socrates.

"It is a difficult thing," says he, "to apprehend the nature of the Creator of the universe; and it would be impossible, and even impious, to expose the discovery to common understandings." He did not shut his gates, or demand an oath of secrecy from his disciples, like Pythagoras, but he purposely threw a veil of obscurity over his

public instructions, and removed it only with very confidential friends. He inculcated temperance, prudence, justice, and self-control. His own command of temper was so great, that once when he had raised his hand to strike a servant for some offence, he stopped and kept his arm in that position. A friend coming in asked what he was doing. "I am punishing an angry man," replied he. But the strongest tendency of his mind was toward the supernatural; and more than all philosophers he reasoned about the origin and destiny of the soul. He taught the existence of one Supreme Being, without beginning, end, or change. This being he called The Good, and compared him to the sun, "which not only makes objects visible, but is the cause of their generation, nutriment, and increase. So The Good, through superessential light, imparts being, and the power of being known, to everything which is the object of knowledge."

He supposed God and Matter to be two eternally distinct principles, opposite in their nature. Matter, which he calls "the mother and receptacle of forms," had within it an inherent perversity, a refractory force, which distorted whatever of the Divine became connected with it; thus it was the origin of evil. The first emanation from The Good was Mind; immortal, indivisible, unchangeable, a portion of Deity himself. This Power being mingled with the feminine principle of Matter caused the birth of a third, which he calls The Soul of the World, and supposes to be the pervading and animating principle of the universe. This Platonic Trinity was purely figurative. It related to the attributes of the Divine Being, not to persons. It was merely a metaphysical way of saying that the Good Being, by agency of his Wisdom, produced a manifestation of his ideas, which was the Model World, according to which this visible earth was made. In the same metaphorical way, he often calls the world The Son of God. Sometimes he asserts that it was without beginning; in other places he speaks of it as begotten. He doubtless means that the Model World of ideas was eternal, being co-existent with



the Divine Mind; but that the inferior world was produced by union with Matter.

From the Soul of the World, God separated inferior souls, equal in number to the stars, and assigned to each its proper celestial abode. These souls, not being direct emanations from pure Divinity, but through the intervention of The Soul of the World, which was itself debased by an admixture with Matter, have in them two dominant springs derived from their two different origins; the love of good, and the desire of pleasure. These are the wings of the soul, and so long as they are not separated, all is well; but when the love of pleasure becomes divided from the love of good, then souls descend in the scale of being.

He represents Jupiter, followed by subordinate Gods and Spirits, traversing the heavens and admiring the wonders of the universe. They ascend above the spheres, to a region where souls contemplate that True Existence, which has neither colour nor form, and can be perceived only by the eyes of the spirit. There they see Goodness and Truth as they exist in Him who is Being itself. They contemplate this glory till they can no longer endure its radiance; then they descend to Olympus, where they refresh themselves with nectar and ambrosia. Souls who faithfully follow Jupiter in this mode of life remain pure. But if they prefer nectar and ambrosia to the contemplation of truth in its Divine Essence, they become dull and heavy, lose their wings, and fall downward, instead of ascending. For such souls was this earth provided, and human bodies.

He supposes the world to be divided into three parts, or zones; the ethereal, the aerial, and the material. The ethereal, in the pure regions of heaven, where are the stars, is the former residence of our souls, before we fell. That is the permanent world; there are the real ideal types of being, fresh from the Divine Mind. "All is beautiful, harmonious, transparent. Fruits of exquisite flavour grow spontaneously; rivers of nectar flow; they breathe light, as we breathe air, and drink water more pure than air itself." "We who live in this profound abyss (the material

world) imagine that we are in an elevated place, and we call the atmosphere heaven; as if a man looking at sun and stars from the bottom of the ocean, and seeing them reflected through the water, should imagine the sea itself was the sky. If we had wings to rise on high, we should see that there is the true heaven, the true light, and the true earth. As in the sea all is troubled, and disfigured by the salts which abound there, so in this present world all is deformed and ruined, in comparison with that primitive world."

Our perceptions of the true and the beautiful are merely "recollections of what the soul formerly saw, when it dwelt with Divinity, in a perfect state of being; when it despised what we now consider realities, and was supernally elevated to the contemplation of that which is true. Unless the soul of man had once perceived divine realities, it could not have entered the human form. But few remember the sacred mysteries they once perceived; and these, when they behold any similitude of supernal forms, are astonished, and, as it were, rapt above themselves. But at the same time, they are ignorant what this passion may be, because they are not endowed with sufficient perception."

He compared souls in this world to men fettered in a deep cave, where the only light admitted proceeded from a fire burning far above and behind them. Many objects passed and repassed in the light, but the prisoner could only see shadows on the wall, caused by the reflection of the fire. All things in this material world he considered mere transitory illusive phantoms, deformed by connection with Matter. Souls imprisoned in mortal bodies, subject to debasing and distorting passions, he likened to Glaucus, who, plunging into the sea, is imagined by poets as half transformed into a fish, his manly figure rendered shapeless by incrustations of sand, shells, and sea-weed.

Of the multitude of Spirits intermediate between gods and men, he says: "Their office is to convey and interpret to the gods the prayers and offerings of men, and bring to men the commands of the gods. These demons are the

source of all prophecy, and of the art of priests in relation to sacrifices, consecrations, and conjurations. Deity has no immediate intercourse with men. All communications between gods and mortals is carried on by means of demons; both in sleeping and waking." Elsewhere he says of them that "they are clothed with air, wander through heaven, hover over the stars, and abide on the earth. They behold unveiled the secrets of time to come, and regulate events according to their pleasure." He believed every human being received at birth a guardian Spirit, who accompanied him to the end, witnessed all his thoughts and actions, conducted his soul to the Judges of the Dead, and testified concerning his motives and actions.

He supposed man to consist of three parts: the rational mind; the soul's image; and the body. This image is described as "the feminine faculty of the soul, and her vital energy upon the body." He taught that the rational soul could never die; it only changed forms. As waking ends in sleep, and sleep terminates in waking, so life ends in death, and death in life. Souls that fell from their high estate, and so came to inhabit human bodies, could gradually regain their glory, by striving to disengage themselves from animal passions, and to rise above external circumstances to the contemplation of divine realities. But if they gave themselves up to sensual pleasures, they wandered long upon the earth, entering successive forms. "For all voluptuousness ties the soul to the body, persuading her that she is of the same nature, and rendering her, so to speak, corporeal; so that she cannot wing her way to a higher life, but, impure and heavy, plunges anew into Matter, and thus becomes incapable of reascending toward pure regions, and uniting with her essence." The soul of a depraved man might, in its second condition, assume the form of a woman, and finally even descend into that of a beast. An animal might become a man, if his soul had once been that of a man; but a soul which had never, in some period of its existence, perceived divine realities, could not possibly enter a human form. Some souls, after they were judged,

would be sent to a subterranean place, there to endure punishments they had deserved; others would ascend to their kindred stars, to enjoy themselves in a manner corresponding to the life they had lived as men. At the end of one thousand years, all of them would return, with liberty to select a second life on earth agreeable to their own desire. Their choice would be influenced by the degree to which they had allowed themselves to become imbruted, and the processes of purification they had undergone. Those who thrice chose to devote themselves to a life in which they could sincerely seek wisdom and love beautiful realities, would fly away to their primeval abode of glory, at the end of three thousand years. But those who did not, through three successive lives, "philosophize sincerely, and love beautiful forms," would have to wait ten thousand years, before they regained their lost wings. This was sometimes called "The soul's orbit of necessity."

Plato, in common with most of the philosophic minds of Greece, was troubled with the stories told by Homer, and other popular poets, concerning the gods; because he considered such descriptions calculated to promote irreverence toward divine natures. But he strove to reconcile the faith of his childhood with the requirements of his spiritual growth, by allegorical interpretations, which transformed them from imaginative legends into significant myths. He discountenanced, as dangerous, any attempts to change established modes of worship. Those who despised oaths, omitted sacrifices, and neglected the gods, he thought ought to be put to death if they were deliberate and rational. If they did it in a kind of madness, he thought they ought to be imprisoned not less than five years, and the citizens not allowed to communicate with them. He believed that men had gradually degenerated from a primeval state of innocence and equality, and that the world would be alternately destroyed and renewed, after the lapse of vast astronomical cycles. He favoured the popular idea that spirits of the dead often hovered round the ashes of their



old bodies, waiting until the new forms were ready for their reception.

Like all other poets and philosophers, he looked back upon a Golden Past, and hoped for a Golden Future. He thus describes the reign of Saturn: "God was then the Prince and common Father of all. He then governed the world by himself; whereas he now governs it by the agency of inferior deities. In those happy days, the fertile fields yielded fruit and corn without tillage. Men had no need of clothing, for there was no inclemency in the seasons. They took their rest on beds of moss perpetually verdant. Cruelty and anger, war and sedition, were unknown. There were no magistrates or civil policy, as now. All men were governed by reason and the love of order."

After that, Saturn was hurled from his throne, and "hid himself in an inaccessible retreat. The foundations of the world were shaken by motions contrary to its first principles, and its beauty and order were lost. Then were good and evil blended together."

"In the end, lest the world should be plunged into an eternal abyss of confusion, the Author of Primitive Order will appear again, and resume the reins of empire. He will change, amend, embellish, and restore the whole frame of nature, and put an end to decay, disease, and death."

The following sayings may be found scattered through the writings of Plato:

"The soul, withdrawn from the influence of the Muses and Graces, sinks into disorder, loses its moral harmony, and often requires the aid of music to attune its jarring strings."

"To say that the gods are easily appeased, is to compare them to dogs or wolves, which are pacified by giving them a portion of the plunder."

"The divine race of stars must be considered as celestial creatures, with most beautiful bodies and happy souls. That they have souls, is evident from the regularity of their motions."

"All see the body of the sun; but the Soul, that ani-

mates it, is not the object of any of our senses; it is perceived by the mind only."

"It is impossible that there should be much happiness in this life; but there is great hope, that after death every person may obtain the things he most wishes for. This is not new, but is known both to Greeks and barbarians."

"The universe belongs to the Deity, and he will not neglect what is his own. He cannot be called a wise physician who only attends to the body in general, and not to particular parts. Nor do governors of cities, or masters of families, neglect small things. Let us not then suppose that God, who is wisest of all, is less wise than men. He is the Shepherd of mankind, taking the same care of them that a shepherd does of his sheep and oxen. He provides for all things, the smallest as well as the greatest."

"He is the Architect of the World, the Father of the Universe, the Creator of Nature, the Sovereign Beauty, and the Supreme Good, the Ruling Mind, which orders all things, and penetrates all things."

"He made the heavens, the earth, and the gods. He is the original life and force of all things in the ethereal regions, upon the earth and under the earth."

"He is the Being, the Unity, the Good, pre-eminently the same in the world of Intelligences that the sun is in the visible world."

"He is Truth, and Light is his shadow."

"What light and sight are in this visible world, truth and intelligence are in the real, unchangeable world."

"The One, better than intellect, from whom all things flow, and to whom they all ultimately tend, is The Good."

"The end and aim of all things should be to attain to The First Good; of whom the sun is but the type, and the material world, with all its host of ministering Spirits, is but the manifestation and the shadow."

"As light and vision resemble the sun, but are not the sun, so knowledge and truth resemble The Good, but are not The Good; which is itself something more venerable."

"As nothing is like the sun, except through solar influ-

ences, so nothing can resemble The Good, but by an emanation of his divine light into the soul."

"To be like the Deity, is to be holy, just, and wise. This is the end of man's being born, and should be his aim in studying philosophy."

"He alone is truly happy who has attained to the divine science of the Deity. To arrive at this state, it is necessary to be convinced that the body is a prison, from which the soul must be released, before it can arrive at the knowledge of those things which are real and immutable."

"The light and spirit of Deity are as wings to the soul, raising it into communion with himself, and above the earth, with which the mind of man is prone to bemoir itself."

"The soul of each of us is an immortal Spirit, and goes to other gods to give an account of its actions."

"Pure souls, who here below have sought to withdraw themselves from terrestrial stains, enter after death into an invisible place, unknown to us, where the pure unites itself to the pure, and our immortal essence is united with the Divine Essence."

"The perfectly just man would be he who should love justice for its own sake, not for the honours and advantages that attend it; who would be willing to pass for unjust, while he practised the most exact justice; who would not suffer himself to be moved by disgrace or distress, but would continue steadfast in the love of justice, not because it is pleasant, but because it is right."

"Prayer is the ardent turning of the soul toward God; not to ask any particular good, but good itself; the universal, supreme good. We often mistake what is pernicious and dangerous for what is useful and desirable. Therefore remain silent before the gods, till they remove the clouds from thy eyes, and enable thee to see, by their light, not what appears good to thyself, but what is really good."

"Beauty ought to be loved for itself, the Source and Centre of all beauty, the Creator, Ruler, and Preserver of all things. It has no similitude on the earth, or in the

heavens. Whatever is beautiful, is so merely by participation of the Supreme Beauty. All other beauty may increase, decay, change, or perish; but this is the same through all time, and in all places. By raising our thoughts above all inferior beauties, we at length reach the Supreme Beauty, which is simple, pure, and immutable, without form, colour, or human qualities. It is the splendour of the divine image. It is the Deity himself. Love of this Supreme Beauty renders a man divine. When the soul rises above herself, and becomes united with it, she brings forth, not the shadows of virtues, but the virtues themselves. She becomes immortal, and the friend of God. There is no one so bad, but love can make a god of him by virtue; so that his soul becomes like unto the Supreme Beauty."

"Look at the sun, and the stars, and the moon! at the earth, with its changing seasons, and all its beauties! Are they not in themselves a power beyond you? a power more grand, more permanent, more lovely, than anything you can create? Is not the very essence of religion, the acknowledgment of such a power? The external world may be but a shadow of the Deity; a symbol of a far higher Power beyond it; a veil to hide his presence; a school to lead you up to him. But in itself it is divine; therefore, there is a Deity, and all mankind believe it."

"How can we, without indignation, reason against men, who compel us to argue, to prove the existence of Deity? In infancy, when lying on the breast, they used to hear, from their nurses and mothers, stories told to soothe or awe them, and repeated, like charms, above their cradles. At the altar they heard these stories blended with prayers, and with all the pomps and ceremonials so fair to the eye of childhood. They saw those same parents offering up their sacrifices with all solemnity, and heard them earnestly and reverently praying for themselves and their children, and with vows and supplications holding communion with Deity, as indeed a living Spirit. When the sun and the moon rose and set, they witnessed all around them the kneeling or prostrate forms of both Greeks and barbarians; all men,



in their joys and their sorrows, clinging as it were to the Deity, not as an empty name, but as their all in all; and never suffering the fancy to intrude that God has no existence. If they have despised all this, and, without one justifying cause, would now compel us to reason, how can such men expect that with calm and gentle words, we should be able to teach them the existence of a Deity?"

"The heavens, the stars, the earth, the souls of men, the divine beings who teach us the religion of our fathers, all these are the Deity."

Much has been said concerning Plato's ideas of Three in One, in the Deity. According to the general testimony of scholars familiar with his writings in their original language, allusions of that kind are exceedingly few, and very vague. The following are examples:

"God gave a Mind to the soul, and a Soul to the body, and constituted the whole world after these, the most perfect and excellent in Nature."

"All things are about the King of all, and all things are for the sake of him, and he is the author of every thing that is fair and good. But the second are about the Second, and the third are about the Third."

"We may call that which receives, the Mother; that from which it was derived, the Father; and the offspring between them is Nature."

"The Divine Word established the movements of the celestial orbs."

"God is the Governor of all things that are, and that are to come; and the Lord is the Father of the Governor."

This dark mode of expression was, doubtless, intentional, and was resorted to either to veil mysteries forbidden to be revealed, or from fear of collision with popular and established opinions.

Such is a very imperfect sketch of the elevated philosophy of Plato. Ideas derived from ancient sources became gloriously transfigured in the light of his poetic mind, and inferior natures cannot give a true reflection of them. The divine and indestructible nature of the soul was the central

point in his system. Purification from the contagions of animal life, by the principles of divine wisdom, he regarded as already a beginning of the immortal life of the gods; and this inward unity with celestial natures, he thought ought to be manifested in outward beauty. Therefore, he loved to be surrounded by majestic and graceful statues, to hear harmonious sounds, to wear clothing made of soft and fine materials, and to observe a becoming propriety in his words and actions.

A short time before his death, he is said to have dreamed that he was changed into a swan. He fell gently asleep among his friends at a wedding banquet, a healthy old man, on his eighty-first birth-day. Some of the Eastern Magi, who happened to be at Athens, are reported to have thought it very significant that his mortal life should have exactly completed the most perfect number: nine times nine. Long after other Grecian sects had fallen into oblivion, his doctrines kept their hold upon the minds of men, and they remain interwoven with much of the philosophy and theology of the present day.

Proclus, one of his followers, several centuries after his death, expresses the opinion that all theology among the Greeks originated in the mystical doctrines of Orpheus. He says: "What Orpheus delivered in hidden allegories, Pythagoras learned when he was initiated into the Orphic Mysteries; and Plato next received a perfect knowledge of them from Orphic and Pythagorean writings."

All three of these men had been in Egypt to obtain instruction concerning spiritual theories. All their systems have the same outline, and harmonize with what can be gathered from Egyptian monuments, and the scanty records that remain concerning the ancient faith of that remarkable people. Plato, therefore, may be taken as a sublimated specimen of Egyptian theology as it existed in their highest and purest minds. The resemblance to Hindoo doctrines must strike every observing reader who compares Plato's theories with the extracts from the Vedas. Strabo, who had good opportunities to become acquainted with the

most prominent ideas prevalent in India, notices the similarity between them and the veiled teaching of Plato. This adds one more to the many proofs already adduced to show that the religions of Hindostan and Egypt were substantially the same.

Aristotle, contemporary with Plato, was more prone to look outward for the evidence of things; being more logical than poetic. But he also accepted the conclusions at which contemplative Hindoos had arrived concerning God and the soul. He describes Deity as "The Eternal Living Being, most noble of all beings; distinct from Matter, without extension, without division, without parts, and without succession; who understands everything, and continuing himself immoveable, gives motion to all things, and enjoys in himself a perfect happiness, knowing and contemplating himself with infinite pleasure." "There are many inferior deities, but only One Mover. All that is said about the human shape of those deities is mere fiction, invented to instruct the common people, and secure their observance of good laws. The First Principle is neither fire, nor earth, nor water, nor anything that is the object of sense. A Spiritual Substance is the cause of the universe, and the source of all order, all beauty, all the motions, and all the forms, which we so much admire in it. All must be reduced to this One Primitive Substance, which governs in subordination to the First." "There is One Supreme Intelligence, who acts with order, proportion, and design; the source of all that is good and just."

"This is the genuine doctrine of the ancients, which has happily escaped the wreck of truth, amid the rocks of vulgar errors and poetic fables."

"After death, the soul continueth in the aerial body till it is entirely purged from all angry and voluptuous passion; then doth it put off, by a second death, the aerial body as it did the terrestrial. Wherefore the ancients say there is another heavenly body always joined with the soul, which is immortal, luminous, and star-like."

This "aerial body" mentioned by Aristotle, is the same

as the "sensuous soul" described by Plato. It was this which seems to have been the "*shade*" of Hercules in the Elysian Fields, while his *soul* was on Olympus with the gods. The "sensuous soul" was the seat of the passions and sensations. The ancients supposed that this subtile vehicle of the "rational soul" exercised *all* the functions of sense, in *every* part of it; that it was "all eye, all ear, all taste."

Cicero, the Roman orator, who died forty-three years before Christ, was so great an admirer of Plato, that he was accustomed to call him "a god among philosophers." Like his Grecian model, he conformed to the religious institutions of the country, and sincerely believed in the divine origin of prophecy; but he attacked several of the popular opinions of his time with so much boldness, that many thought his works ought to be suppressed. He believed in One Supreme God, who controls the universe, as the human soul controls the body. He rejected the idea of anything vindictive in the future punishment of the wicked, considering it a blasphemy against Deity to suppose him capable of anger, or any other passion. He regarded the numerous tutelary deities as subordinate agents of the Supreme Being, and ridiculed the stories told of them by poets. He thought all knowledge was a reminiscence of experience obtained in former states of being. The eternal nature of the soul seemed to him fully demonstrated by its longing for immortality, its comprehensive faculties, its recollections, and its foresight. His writings were very extensively known, and greatly contributed to raise the previous standard of morality.

He says: "No man was ever truly great without divine inspiration."

"Whatever name custom hath given to the gods, we ought to reverence and adore them. The best, the purest, the most religious worship, of the gods, is to reverence them always with a sincere, unpolluted, and perfect mind."

"The true primeval law is the Supreme Reason of the great Jupiter. It is eternal, immutable, universal. It does



not vary according to time and place. It is not different now from what it was formerly. The same law sways all nations, because it proceeds from the King and common Father of all. A crime is none the less criminal because there is no human law against it. The law imprinted on the hearts of all men is to love the members of society as themselves. Love of order is the sovereign justice, and this justice is excellent for its own sake. Whoever loves it for its utility, is politic, but not good. The highest injustice is to love justice only for the sake of recompense. The eternal, unchangeable, universal law of all beings is to seek the good of one another, like children of the same Father."

Cicero informs us that philosophers of all schools agreed in believing the Supreme Deity incapable of inflicting punishment, or feeling resentment; that anger toward one, and favour toward another, were equally inconsistent with an immortal, wise, and happy nature. Therefore, they all agreed that fear could have no place in the mind of man with regard to God.

Like Plato, he was very conservative with regard to established forms, regarding them as necessary for the preservation of good order. He says: "When religion is in question, I do not consider what is the doctrine thereon of Zeno, Cleanthes, or Chrysippus, but I am guided by what the Chief Priests say of it. From you, who are a philosopher, I am not unwilling to receive reasons for my faith; but to our ancestors I trust implicitly, without receiving any reason at all."

He thought those who disturbed popular belief in the auguries ought to be punished. For that reason he entered a complaint against two men who sailed contrary to the auspices; because, according to his views, the established "religion is to be obeyed, and the customs of our forefathers are not to be discarded."

The Stoics, founded by Zeno, about three hundred years before Christ, had numerous adherents, especially among the Romans, to whose stern and lofty character their doc-

trines were well adapted. They explained virtue as the true harmony of man with himself, and with the laws of nature, without regard to reward or punishment. This state was to be attained by mastery over the passions and affections, and complete indifference to external things. Self-denial and resolute endurance were prominent points in their moral teaching. They were characterized by abstemiousness, plainness of dress, and strict regard to decorum. They held that a man was at liberty to lay down his life whenever he deemed it no longer useful. Zeno, and others of their teachers, committed suicide in old age. They believed the universe was pervaded by a Divine Intelligence, as by a soul. The elements and the heavenly orbs partook of this divine essence, and were therefore suitable objects of worship. They did not adopt the common doctrine of successive transmigrations of the human soul, but held that it returned to the Supreme Soul, after death. Epictetus says: "There is no Tartarus. You do not go to a place of pain. You return to the source from which you came, to a delightful reunion with your primitive elements." They were taught not to deprecate impending calamities, but to pray for resignation and fortitude to endure them. Marcus Antoninus says: "Either the gods have power, or no power. If they have no power, why do you pray? If they have power, why do you not rather pray that you may be without anxiety about an event, than that the event may not take place?"

In common with many of the Grecian sects, they believed in the old Hindoo, Chaldean, and Egyptian calculations concerning the destruction of the world by water and by fire. This universal devastation was to take place at stated intervals, with vast astronomical intervals between. All was to be restored to a state of order, innocence, and beauty; the old tendency to degeneracy would end in similar destruction, to be again renovated; and so on alternately forever. Seneca says: "A time will come when the world, ripe for renovation, will be wrapped in flames; when the opposite powers in conflict will mutually destroy

each other. The constellations will dash together, and the whole universe, plunged in the same common fire, will be consumed to ashes. The world being melted and re-entered into the bosom of Jupiter, this god will continue for some time concentrated in himself, immersed in the contemplation of his own ideas. Afterward, a new world will spring from him, perfect in all its parts. The whole face of nature will be more lovely; and under more favourable auspices, an innocent race of men will people this earth, the worthy abode of virtue."

The religious doctrines and customs of Greece were adopted by Rome without essential alterations. Something of their gracefulness was lost under the influence of her less poetic character, but a stronger moral element was infused. In the days of the Roman Republic, temples were erected to Concord, Faith, Constancy, Modesty, and even to Peace. Venus Verticordia presided over the purity of domestic morals, and the most virtuous woman in Rome was chosen to dedicate her statue. Religion was intimately connected with the state. The Emperor was the Supreme Pontiff; and High Priests were chosen among the most illustrious senators. The priests, both of the city and the provinces, were mostly men of wealth and rank, who received, as an honourable distinction, the care of some celebrated temple, or some public sacrifice, or the sacred games, which were frequently exhibited at their own expense. They acted as magistrates, and claimed none of the peculiar sacredness which so strongly riveted the power of Hindoo and Egyptian priests.

Numa, second king of Rome, forbade the people to put images or pictures in their temples; giving as a reason that God was to be apprehended only by the mind, and it was wrong to represent the most excellent being by such mean things. For one hundred and sixty years, their temples contained neither statues nor paintings. It was the policy of government to exclude foreign worship, and for a time they tried to enforce it rigidly. But Rome, being the centre of power, was the point of confluence for all nations of

the earth, and it became necessary to allow foreign residents and visitors the practice of their own religious rites. This toleration was easily granted, because it was a common opinion among polytheistic nations that every country had the religion best suited to its climate and character, and that the deity it worshipped, whoever he might be, was one of many beneficent Spirits, appointed to preside over various divisions of the earth, and manifold departments of the universe. From Egypt, Carthage, Gaul, Persia, and numerous other countries, the conquering armies of Rome brought back foreign customs and opinions with the spoils of war. The popular feeling in favour of adding the gods of other nations to their own established worship became too strong for the policy of government or the wisdom of sages to resist. The worship of Serapis was first celebrated in private chapels at Rome, then publicly prohibited; the first temples erected to him were ordered to be destroyed; afterward, it was permitted to build them within a mile of the city; and at last he was formally acknowledged and established among the deities. The Persian Mithras was enrolled in the same calendar. The Magi, resident in Rome, introduced his Mysteries, which were solemnized in a cave. In the process of initiation, candidates were subjected to severe ordeals, such as long fasts in solitude and darkness, passing through deep waters and through fire. It is said that one of the ceremonies of admission was to eat bread and drink wine, and to receive the mark of a Cross on the forehead; probably the Hindoo and Egyptian Cross, already described. When the Jews became tributary to Rome, they were protected in their own forms of worship; it being readily admitted that Jehovah might be a true national deity, though not the only Governor of the Universe. Solemn embassies were sent to invite Cybele from Phrygia, and Æsculapius from Greece. The image of Astarte was brought from Carthage to Rome, to be married to the image of the Sun; and the day of their mystic nuptials was kept as a festival throughout the empire. It was a common custom to tempt the deities of besieged cities, by



promising them more distinguished honours in Rome than they received in their own country.

Roman priests, as well as those of Hindostan, were acquainted with a chemical process, which enabled them to resist fire. Strabo says that many persons, every year, walked barefoot over burning coals without receiving the slightest injury, and crowds assembled to see it. The more rational citizens of Rome strongly disapproved of nocturnal assemblies, as occasions for revelry and licentiousness, under the disguise of religion. They discountenanced the impure rites practised in temples of Venus, and the mad orgies connected with the worship of Bacchus; and at last their influence so far prevailed, that the festivals of Bacchus were prohibited by law.

Rome was the great gathering-place for all the nations of the earth. To the general admixture of religious forms and creeds was added almost unlimited freedom of inquiry in the philosophical schools. The ceremonies consecrated by long established custom were observed for reasons of state, and to satisfy the requisitions of the populace; but they gradually degenerated into mere lifeless forms. Cicero argues that it was impossible the oracle at Delphi could have gained so much reputation in the world, and been enriched with such costly presents from almost all kings and nations, had not the veracity of its prophecies been confirmed by the experience of ages. But he informs us that it had declined very much before his day; the Pythia being often accused of taking bribes of the rich and powerful.

A belief in the existence of the soul after death was indicated in all periods of the history of Greece and Rome, by the fact that they were always accustomed to address prayers to the Spirits of their ancestors, when overwhelmed with trouble, or about to undertake any important enterprise. They likewise offered sacrifices for the benefit of the dead, and performed such games at their tombs as they most delighted in while living on this earth. But though they thus implied a belief that spirits of the departed were pres-

ent, and took cognizance of the affairs of this world, their writers never urged the rewards of another life as inducements to virtue, or its punishments as furnishing motives to avoid crime. They inculcated a stoical resignation to the will of the gods, and reconciled themselves to death because mortals were thus released from the calamities of this world.

In the latter times of Greece and Rome, educated minds retained very little belief in the popular forms of theology. Philosophers had long risen above them to the contemplation of One Supreme Mind, and poets had long been accustomed to play with them as mere graceful fancies. Still the idea prevailed that fables were necessary for the populace. Strabo says: "It is impossible to govern a mob of women, or the whole mixed multitude, and to exhort them to piety, holiness, and faith, by philosophic reasoning. We must also employ superstition, with its fables and prodigies. The thunder, the ægis, the trident, the serpents, the torches, the thyrsi of the gods, are fables, bugbears to those who are children in understanding; as is all the ancient theology."

Cicero represents an Epicurean as saying: "It is marvellous how one of the Augurs can look another in the face without laughing."

Plutarch thus describes a philosopher of the same school: "He hypocritically enacts prayer and adoration, from fear of the enemy. He utters words directly opposite to his philosophy. While he is sacrificing, the ministering priest seems to him no more than a cook; and he departs, uttering the line of Menander: 'I have sacrificed to gods in whom I have no concern.'"

Juvenal tells us that poets indulged their imagination to such a degree concerning future rewards and punishments, that even the Roman children ceased to believe them.

"The silent realm of disembodied ghosts,  
The frogs that croak along the Stygian coasts,  
The thousand souls in one crazed vessel steered,  
Not boys believe—save boys without a beard."

Pliny the Younger, in the opening of his *Natural History*, speaks of the immortality of the soul as an idle notion, a mere vision of human pride; equally absurd whether under the form of transmigration, or that of existence in another sphere.

The custom of deifying great men was carried to such an extent, that it became a regular custom for the Roman senate to decree divine honours to every emperor, after death, without reference to character. Vespasian, being ill, said jestingly: "I am a god, or at least not far from it." All the old forms were occasionally a theme for mirth or satire, except the Eleusinian Mysteries. Down to the latest period of their religion, Greek and Roman writers always approached that subject with the deepest reverence.

The declining oracles continued to be occasionally consulted till the fourth century of our era, when the Roman emperors became converts to Christianity. The oracles were soon after silenced, the order of Vestals abolished, the sacred fire extinguished, and most of the temples destroyed.

Thus passed away from the face of our earth the beautiful pageantry of a religion which for more than two thousand years had expressed the aspirations of the human soul in its search after the infinite unknown. Its solemn train of priests and prophets disappeared; its voice of prayer and music no longer descended from the mountain tops, or rose in swelling chorus from processions winding through the valleys. But such truth as there was in it fell into the bosom of philosophy, and brought forth flowers, which still cast their seed into the future. Even its allegories linger in our literature, like the illustrious shadows in their own Elysian Fields. School-boys of every nation are familiar with the Grecian gods; Cupid rides on roses in our Valentines; Diana holds our lamps; the Italian peasant still swears by Bacchus; and the American poet of yesterday invokes the Muses.

## THE CELTIC TRIBES.

Yet shall it claim our reverence, that to God  
 These jealous ministers of law aspire,  
 As to the One sole Fount, whence wisdom flowed;  
 And yon thick woods maintain that primal truth,  
 Debased by many a superstitious form,  
 That fills the soul with unavailing ruth.

WORDSWORTH.

THERE was a country in Asia called Scythia, the boundaries of which are extremely uncertain. Tribes migrated thence, and gradually spread over a large portion of Europe. They bore a variety of names in different places; but those who settled in the countries now called Germany, France, Spain, and Great Britain, were known by the general appellation of the Celtic tribes.

The religious doctrines of the Celts were known only to the priests, who never allowed them to be committed to writing. Therefore we have only slight information concerning them, obtained from Romans who came in contact with those nations by conquest. Tacitus says the ancient Germans, called Teutones, believed in the existence of One Supreme Being, to whom all things were obedient. The whole universe was animated by this Divinity, portions of whom resided in all things. For this reason, they worshipped sun, moon, stars, earth, and water. They kept a sacred fire burning in their forests, and had a religious festival, during which they universally lighted great fires. Tacitus says: "They suppose Hertha, or Mother Earth, to interfere in the affairs of men, and visit different nations. In an island of the ocean stands a sacred and unviolated grove, in which is a consecrated chariot, covered with a veil, which the priest alone is permitted to touch. He



perceives when the goddess enters this secret recess; and with profound veneration he attends the vehicle, which is drawn by yoked cows. At this season all is joy. Every place which the goddess deigns to visit is a scene of festivity. No wars are undertaken; every hostile weapon is laid aside. Then only are peace and repose known, then only are they loved. After a time the same priest reconducts the goddess to her temple, satisfied with mortal intercourse. The chariot and its covering, and, if we may believe it, the goddess herself, then undergo ablution in a secret lake. This office is performed by slaves, whom the lake instantly swallows up. Hence proceeds a mysterious horror, and a holy ignorance of what that can be, which is beheld only by those who are about to perish."

The ancient Germans worshipped a deity called Tuisco, or Teut, from whom they derived their name, Teutones. Their traditions affirmed that Tuisco produced mankind by marrying Hertha, or the Earth; which of course had an allegorical meaning concerning the union of Spirit and Matter. The image of a woman with a child in her arms was common in their consecrated forests, and was held peculiarly sacred. They had magnificent religious processions in honour of the sun, and greeted the New Moon and the Full Moon with torchlight processions.

They held the river Rhine in great veneration, and threw rich gifts, sometimes silver and gold, into rivers and lakes, as an offering to the deity presiding over waters. They believed in a multitude of Spirits, gliding about everywhere, and animating all things, great and small. Among these were the elves, some good and some evil. One of them delighted in producing the nightmare; others caused various diseases and inconveniences.

The Celtic priests were called Druids; supposed to be derived from a word meaning an oak, because they worshipped in groves of oak. Greek and Roman writers believed them to have been a very ancient order, a branch of the Chaldean Magi, or Hindoo Bramins. It is recorded by several authors that they made their appearance in Europe,

from eastern parts of the world, soon after the time of Abraham. Julius Cæsar, who was a close observer of the nations he conquered, says they believed in the immortality of the soul, and its transmigration into different bodies. Their austere lives, in the solitude of mighty forests, impressed even him with awe. They were a distinct hereditary caste, and elected their own chief, who retained his office during life. Their employments divided them into three classes. Bards, who chanted hymns to the gods, and sang the praises of heroes, to the accompaniment of the lyre; another class, who decided judicial questions, and attended to the education of youth; and a still higher order, who superintended religious ceremonies and magical rites. All things appertaining to worship were intrusted solely to them. They alone were exempted from taxes and military duty. They administered justice, and pronounced decrees of reward and punishment. The power of striking and binding criminals, and of inflicting the penalties they had decreed, was vested in them. No important enterprise was undertaken till the prophets among them had been consulted. In all cities they appointed the highest officers, who never ventured to do anything without their advice. If any one refused to submit to their ordinances, they publicly excommunicated him from all share in sacrifices and worship, and declared him to be henceforth one of the profane. By this process, he was rendered incapable of holding any honourable office, and was deprived of the benefit of the laws in questions of property. Such persons were deemed so infamous, that their most intimate friends did not dare to talk with them, even at a distance, for fear of being infected with the terrible curse that rested upon them. Sometimes the Druids pronounced solemn maledictions against a whole city or nation; and this was dreaded as a great public calamity. They studied the course of the stars, and predicted future events from their motions. Such knowledge as there was of medicine was confined to them. They had various magical rites for casting out Evil Spirits and imparting mysterious power to plants and minerals.

The oak was to them the most sacred of all trees. On occasions of solemn ceremony they always crowned themselves with garlands of its leaves. The mistletoe, a parasitic plant, which takes root in the trunk of oaks, they regarded with peculiar veneration, and believed it to be a panacea for all the diseases of mankind. They always cut it with a golden knife. Black hellebore was another remedy much in use among them. None but Druids might gather it, and they must be sure to go barefooted, dressed in white. Before they plucked the sacred plant, they offered oblations of bread and wine, and covered the right hand with their robe. It was considered extremely efficacious to rub diseased people with juice of vervain. Sprinklings of it, accompanied by prayers, were supposed to reconcile hearts at enmity, and make the melancholy cheerful. They were careful to gather the herb at the rising of Sirius, or of the sun. The Lunaria, or Moon-Plant, was gathered only when the moon shone on it. Hindoo Sacred Books make reverent allusions to a Moon-Plant. Indeed the general resemblance between the Celtic and Hindoo religions is observable.

The Druids had schools in the forest, where youths committed to memory certain maxims in verse, inculcating the worship of the gods, bravery in battle, respect to the chastity of women, and implicit obedience to Druids, magistrates, and parents. These verses sometimes contained allegorical meaning, which was explained, under an oath of secrecy, to those educated for the higher orders of the priesthood. It was not allowable to commit them to writing; and even if they had been written, few could have spelled them out; for princes and warriors in those days did not know how to sign their names, and labouring people were almost in the condition of animals. The Druids were in full power in Gaul and Britain at the time of Julius Caesar's conquests, half a century before Christ. Our English ancestors at that period lived in huts and covered themselves with skins of beasts.

Women performed an important part in the Druidical

religion. The highest order of priestesses were vowed to perpetual celibacy, and lived in consecrated places. A second order were allowed to live with their husbands on certain days, when their services were not wanted in religious ceremonies; some say it was only one day in the year. A third order, attendants upon the others, resided with their families, and reared children for the priesthood. Among Asiatic nations, voluptuousness is the only feeling excited by women; and the female character is consequently feeble and shallow. Never allowed to think or act for themselves, the intellectual and high moral qualities of human nature slumber in complete inaction. The customs of Celtic tribes in Europe were remarkably the reverse of this. Men were themselves in a rude and barbarous condition, but such as it was, women were on the same level. Both sexes held consultation together in councils of state, and fought in battle with equal bravery. Among the Teutones, women were the only physicians. In Asia, there were always ten prophets to one prophetess. But Celtic nations believed that women were endowed with supernatural powers in a pre-eminent degree. Tacitus says: "The Germans suppose some divine and prophetic quality resident in their women, and are careful neither to disregard their admonitions nor neglect their answers." Strabo relates that the Cimbri were followed to war by venerable gray-haired prophetesses, barefooted, in white linen robes, fastened with clasps and girdles of brass. "These go with drawn swords through the camp, strike down the prisoners they meet, and drag them to a brazen kettle. The priestess ascends a platform above it, cuts the throat of the victim, and from the manner in which the blood flows into the vessel, she judges of future events. Others tear open the bodies of captives thus butchered, and from inspection of the entrails presage victory to their own party."

The Druids alone had power to determine whose blood would be most acceptable to the gods. They generally sacrificed captive enemies or convicted criminals; but sometimes innocent natives were chosen for that purpose,



and the dread of such a fate greatly increased the fear and reverence which the populace entertained toward priests and priestesses. In all cases where the life of a man was concerned, they supposed the deities could be appeased only by the life of a man. Thus, if one man had shed the blood of another, his own must be shed. If a man was in danger from desperate illness, or about to incur uncommon perils, they supposed the danger was incurred by sins, and that they might be atoned for by the sacrifice of another man. In such cases they made vows to the gods to sacrifice a human victim, if their own lives were spared; and such vows they were religiously bound to perform. Sometimes, to atone for national sins, or avert national calamities, they sacrificed whole hecatombs of human beings, as the Hindoos used to sacrifice a thousand horses at once, and the Greeks a hundred oxen. On such occasions, they made a huge image of basket-work, in the shape of a man, and filled it with men, women, and children. Then they surrounded it with combustibles, and they all perished in the flames. These victims were generally captives and criminals, who were sometimes reserved for several years, till an occasion occurred to offer them all together. The cruelty of this custom was softened to their own minds by a belief that victims offered to the gods were purified from all mortal stain by the process, and raised to an equality with superior natures.

It was the universal faith that all events happened according to unalterable laws of destiny, known only to the gods, and revealed by them to certain favoured mortals. They fully believed that criminals could be detected by subjecting suspected persons to ordeals, such as walking on red-hot metals, or plunging the arm into boiling oil. If they were guiltless, people believed that Good Spirits would interfere for their protection, and they would escape unharmed. Earthquakes, tempests, and other convulsions of nature, were supposed to be occasioned by the death of some great man.

Their morality was rather of an external character, but

extremely strict in its laws. Bravery was the crowning virtue in men, and chastity in women. A high proud sense of personal honour was the restraining principle in both. Licentiousness was much detested, and of rare occurrence. Heroes, who died fighting for their country, were perfectly certain of passing at once into a paradise of eternal joy, whatever might be their character in other respects. This belief inspired men with wild and furious courage, and a reckless contempt of death. They gave strong proof of faith in a future existence; for they frequently loaned money on a solemn promise that it should be repaid to them in another world. It was likewise common to put letters in the hands of the dead, with the fullest belief that they would deliver them to departed souls, according to direction. If people killed themselves, from a wish to accompany deceased friends, it was supposed that their souls would dwell together.

Druids had the Persian feeling concerning statues. They never represented the gods by images. Their religious ceremonies were performed in consecrated caverns and groves of the forest. They supposed such dark and solemn places were the favourite resort of powerful spirits, from whom oracular communications could be obtained by the performance of appropriate rites. Military standards were kept in the hallowed recesses of these sacred caverns. When the Druids delivered them to warriors going to battle, they pronounced terrible imprecations on the heads of their enemies, devoting them all as victims to Tuisco, god of war. The consecrated groves were approached with religious awe. Men would have been terrified with fears of vengeance from offended deities, if they had cut down one of the trees, even by mistake. They hung them with garlands and trophies, and the remains of victims that had been offered. On altars among the trees were placed oblations of fruit, grain, and flowers; and through thickly interwoven boughs rose the smoke of burnt-offerings; of men and animals sacrificed to propitiate the gods.

Celtic nations adopted some of the Roman deities, after

they became a portion of that empire; but they worshipped them according to their ancient fashion, in caverns, or groves, or on huge altars of stone reared in the open plain. Many vestiges of these old Druidical monuments remain in France and England. On the island of Anglesea are the ruins of a temple, that enclosed twenty-two acres; and a single one of the stones, when broken in pieces, made twenty cart-loads. The famous ruins at Stonehenge, in England, are supposed to have been an ancient Temple of the Sun. The masses of stone are so immense, that the neighbouring peasantry to this day believe they must have been brought together by agency of the devil. In some places, rocks of prodigious size are poised on small ones, in such a manner that they can be easily put in motion, though the strength of a giant could not destroy their balance. There were but few temples erected for this worship, and some of them are said to have resembled those of Hindostan. Another proof of the Asiatic origin of these tribes is found in the fact that the ancient language of Germany, called Teutonic, bears a very strong resemblance to Sanscrit.

In the century preceding the Christian era, Roman emperors abolished human sacrifices among these people, and deprived the Druids of power, on account of their dangerous political influence.

# J E W S.

J E H O V A H ! shapeless Power above all powers,  
Single and one, the omnipresent God,  
By vocal utterance, or blaze of light,  
Or cloud of darkness, localized in heaven ;  
On earth enshrined within the wandering Ark ;  
Or out of Zion thundering from his throne  
Between the Cherubim.

WORDSWORTH.

THE history of the Jews commences with Abraham, their most celebrated patriarch, the tenth generation from Noah. It is supposed he was born in Chaldea, about two thousand years before Christ. He was doubtless educated in the planetary worship of the Chaldeans, and accustomed to adore the images by which they represented the Spirits of sun and stars. Joshua, addressing the tribes of Israel, long after Abraham's day, says: "Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood [the river Euphrates] in old time; even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor; and they served other gods." The Greek historian, Suidas, asserts that Terah was a statuary, and made images of the gods for sale. Among the traditions of Jewish Rabbis, it is recorded that Terah, having occasion to take a journey, left his business in the care of Abraham. A man, who came in, apparently to purchase, asked Abraham how old he was. He replied: "I am fifty." "Yet you worship an image made but yesterday!" rejoined the stranger. These bold words made a deep impression upon Abraham. Some time after, a woman brought flour as an offering to the gods; but Abraham, instead of presenting the oblation, placed a hatchet in the hands of the largest



image, and broke all the others in pieces. When his father returned and asked the meaning of this destruction, he replied that the gods had quarrelled which should have an oblation of flour, and the strongest one had destroyed the others. "You are bantering," said Terah; "for images have not sense to do that." "Say you so?" rejoined Abraham; "then how absurd it is to worship them!"

The same traditions declare that Abraham was persecuted by the Chaldean government, on account of his infidelity concerning the popular gods; that he was condemned to pass through fire, but escaped from the ordeal unharmed. Terah afterward removed to Haran, in Mesopotamia, accompanied by children and grandchildren. Abraham was then seventy years old. According to Josephus, historian of the Jews, "he was a person of great sagacity, both for understanding all things, and persuading his hearers; and not mistaken in his opinions. For which reason he began to have higher notions of virtue than others had, and he determined to renew and to change the opinion all men had concerning God. He was the first who ventured to publish the idea that there was but One God, the Creator of the universe; that as to other gods, if they contributed anything to the happiness of men, they each afforded it according to His appointment, and not by their own power. His opinion was derived from the irregular phenomena visible both at land and sea, as well as those that happen to the sun, moon, and all the heavenly bodies. If, said he, these bodies have power of their own, they would certainly take care of their own regular motions; but since they do not preserve such regularity, they make it plain that, so far as they co-operate to our advantage, they do it not of their own abilities, but as they are subservient to Him, who commands them, to whom alone we ought to offer honour and thanksgiving. For which doctrine, when the Chaldeans, and other people of Mesopotamia, raised a tumult against him, he thought fit to leave that country, and at the command, and by the assistance of God, he came and lived in the land of Canaan." Nahor, his brother, remained with

his family in Mesopotamia, and his descendants adhered to the worship of images.

Josephus says: "After this, when famine invaded the land of Canaan, and Abraham had discovered the Egyptians were in a flourishing condition, he was disposed to go down to them, both to partake of the plenty they enjoyed, and to become an auditor of their priests, to know what they said concerning the gods; designing either to follow them, if they had better notions than he, or to convert them into a better way, if his own notions proved the truest." He conversed with the most learned among the Egyptians, and conferred with various sects, by whom "he was admired as a very wise man, and one of very great sagacity."

Among ancient nations and tribes, it was a general custom to marry very near relatives, with a view to sustain particular families, by strengthening the bond between them. According to the testimony of Josephus, Abraham married his own niece; but in Genesis he himself is recorded as saying: "She is my sister; the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife." We are told he returned from Egypt "with sheep and oxen, he-asses and she-asses, men-servants and maid-servants." Sarah, his wife, being childless, requested him to take one of these bondwomen for a concubine. Her name was Hagar, which signifies a stranger. She bore Abraham a son, and they called his name Ishmael. Sarah at first loved the child, as if it were her own; but when she herself gave birth to a son, she became jealous of the older boy, and dealt hardly with his mother. She said to her husband: "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac." Hebrew Scriptures inform us that "the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight, because of his son. But God said, Harken unto the voice of Sarah in all she has said unto thee." So the poor stranger from a foreign land was sent forth with her child into the wilderness, where they came

near perishing with thirst. After Sarah's death, Abraham married Keturah, by whom he had sons. That he likewise had descendants from mothers whose names are not mentioned, is implied by the record in Genesis: "Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. Unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, he gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, unto the east country, while he was yet alive."

Little is known concerning the religious views of Abraham, except his belief in one Supreme God. Faith in subordinate Spirits is implied by the frequent mention of angels. In Hebrew, the word angel simply means a messenger. The young men who ate bread and veal in Abraham's tent, and seized Lot by the hand to hurry him away from Sodom, appear by their proceedings to have been mortal messengers; but Josephus calls them "angels of God." When Hagar and Ishmael were perishing in the wilderness, it is said "the angel of God called to her out of heaven;" and when she raised her eyes, she perceived a fountain. On several occasions, we are told that "the angel of God called to Abraham out of heaven." God himself is represented as talking familiarly with him. That he appeared in some visible form, seems to be implied by the words: "And God left off talking with him and went up from Abraham."

Wherever Abraham sojourned, he erected an altar and sacrificed to the Lord. A heifer, a ram, a goat, a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon, are mentioned among his offerings. It was a prevailing opinion with ancient nations, that human sacrifices were acceptable to the deities, and of higher value than the sacrifice of animals. That Abraham admitted such an idea, is implied by his belief that the Divine Being required him to sacrifice his gentle and virtuous son Isaac, then twenty-five years old. Hebrew Sacred Writings, as they have come down to us, merely state that "God did tempt Abraham, and said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and offer him for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains I will

tell thee of." But when all was in readiness, the angel of the Lord called to him out of heaven, to say that his willingness was a sufficient proof of his obedient faith. "And Abraham, lifting up his eyes, saw a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and he offered him up for a burnt-offering instead of his son." Josephus gives a more amplified account of the transaction. He says: "God being desirous to make an experiment of Abraham's religious disposition toward himself, appeared to him, and enumerated all the blessings he had bestowed on him; how he had made him superior to all his enemies, and that his son Isaac, who was a principal part of his present happiness, was derived from him; and he said he required this son of his as a sacrifice and holy oblation. Accordingly, he commanded him to carry him to Mount Moriah, build an altar, and offer him for a burnt-offering upon it. Abraham, who thought it was not right to disobey God in anything, prepared to follow the injunction. When it became necessary to make his intentions known to the unconscious victim, he said: 'O my son, I poured out a vast number of prayers that I might have thee; and when thou wast come into the world, I was greatly solicitous for everything that could contribute to thy support. There was nothing wherein I thought myself happier than to see thee grown up to man's estate, that I might leave thee successor to my dominions. It was by God's will that I became thy father, and since it is now his will that I should relinquish thee, bear this consecration to God with a generous mind. I resign thee up to God, who has thought fit to require this testimony of honour to himself, on account of the favours he has conferred on me, in being to me a supporter and defender. Accordingly, thou, my son, will now die, not in any common way of going out of the world, but sent beforehand to God, the Father of all men, by thy own father, in the nature of a sacrifice. I suppose he thinks thee worthy to get clear of this world, not by disease, or war, or any of the severe modes by which death usually comes upon men; but he will receive



thy soul with prayers and holy offices of religion, and will place thee near to himself, and thou wilt there be to me a succour and support to my old age, on which account I principally brought thee up, and will thereby procure me God for my comforter, instead of thyself.' Isaac replied that he was not worthy to be born at first, if he should oppose the will of God and his father; since it would have been wrong not to obey even his father alone, if he had so resolved. So he went immediately to the altar to be sacrificed. But God called loudly to Abraham by name, and forbade him to slay his son; saying he was satisfied by the surprising readiness he showed in this his piety, and was now delighted that he had bestowed so many blessings upon him. He foretold also that his family should increase into many nations; that those patriarchs should obtain possession of the land of Canaan, be envied by all men, and leave behind them an everlasting name. When God had said this, he produced a ram for the sacrifice, which did not appear before."

The common idea of the sacredness of groves seems to have been inherited by Abraham; for we are told that "at Beersheba he planted a grove, and called there on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God." Of the rite of circumcision no mention is made until twenty-four years after his visit to Egypt, and fourteen years after he had taken an Egyptian concubine. Hebrew Scriptures inform us that when her child was thirteen years old, and Abraham was ninety-nine, "God made a covenant with him, saying, Every male child among you shall be circumcised;" and the rite was accordingly performed on Abraham and all his household.

Jewish traditions say the soul of Adam passed into Abraham; the same soul afterward inhabited the form of king David; and it will again animate the Messiah, whom they expect. Some Rabbis relate that the mere sight of a precious stone hung about Abraham's neck, cured all manner of diseases; and after his death, God hung that jewel on the sun.

Abraham was the first who was called a Hebrew, from Hibri, meaning beyond the Euphrates. Some derive the appellation from Heber, one of the ancestors of Abraham ; but this is probably erroneous.

In the times of Isaac and Jacob, the Hebrews were merely one nomadic family of herdsmen and hunters. The oldest in every family performed their simple religious ceremonies ; for as yet they had no priesthood. Isaac and Jacob both married descendants of Abraham's brother Nahor, who had remained in Mesopotamia when other members of the family departed for Canaan. The nature of their worship is indicated by the fact that when Rachel left her father's house, she stole his images of the gods. Similar ideas were doubtless mingled with the education of her children, who were men and women when Jacob removed to Bethel. Before he sacrificed to the God of Abraham on the altar he had erected there, "he said to his household, and to those that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods that were in their hands, and he hid them under the oak."

The patriarchal modes of worship resembled those of all the nations round about. That ablution was practised before they performed religious ceremonies, is shown by Jacob's injunction to his household to make themselves clean and change their garments before they sacrificed to the Lord. Wherever they had a remarkable adventure, or a prophetic dream, they set up a pillar of stone, anointed it with oil, and "poured a drink-offering thereon." Altars were generally built on mountains or hills, where they sacrificed animals, or offered oblations of fruit and grain. Jacob vowed a place for worship called Bethel, which means God's house ; and there he promised to pay tithes of all God should give him.

Angels are spoken of as appearing to the patriarchs not only in dreams, but visibly in waking moments. "Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him ; and when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host." Jo-

sephus says: "Jacob meeting with an angel, wrestled with him; the angel beginning the struggle. But he prevailed over the angel, who used a voice and spake to him in words, exhorting him to be pleased with what had happened to him, and not to suppose the victory was a small one; for he had overcome a divine angel, and ought to esteem the victory a sign of great blessings that should come to him. He also commanded him to be called Israel, which in the Hebrew tongue signifies one that struggled with the divine angel. These promises were made at the prayer of Jacob; for when he perceived him to be the angel of God, he desired he would signify to him what should befall him hereafter. When the angel had said what is before related, he disappeared. Jacob was pleased with these things, and named the place Phanuel, which signifies the face of God. Now when he felt pain upon his broad sinew by this struggling, he abstained from eating that sinew afterward; and for his sake it is still not eaten by us." Hebrew Sacred Books relate the adventure more briefly. Jacob remarks: "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved;" which implies a belief that he had wrestled with God himself. The ancient idea that a spirit of prophecy descends on souls about to quit this world, seems to have existed here also; for Jacob on his death-bed foretold the destiny of all his sons. Blessing his grandchildren before he died, he said: "The God of Abraham and Isaac, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." Some of the Jewish Rabbis, in their commentaries on this text, say their ancestor did not directly pray to angels, but invoked God through intermediate Spirits, as petitions are presented to the king through his ministers. Others say Jacob prayed to God for blessings, and to the Angel to avert evils.

God is represented as saying to Moses: "I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as Elshaddai; but by my name Jehovah was I not known unto them. Elshaddai is translated the Almighty God. From the few fragments of history which have come down to us, it is not possible to ascertain clearly what ideas of the Divine

Being were entertained by these wandering patriarchs. Reverence for the supernatural, which covered ancient Hindostan with altars, filled Egypt with temples, and sent up incense from all the Grecian hills, inspired them also with faith in spiritual agencies, prompted them to offer to God the first-fruits of their fields and flocks, and mingled religious observances with all the events of life. Their moral perceptions were influenced by the rudeness of the age in which they lived; and the same remark applies to the founders of all ancient nations. Hebrew records describe them as men of God; but they also tell us that they quarrelled about their flocks and herds, and resorted to many tricks and falsehoods. Abraham, to ensure his own safety, represented his wife as his sister, and by so doing brought "great plagues on Pharaoh and his house." While Esau had gone out hunting to bring venison for his aged father, Jacob disguised himself in Esau's clothes, and made his hands hairy, in order to obtain the blessing intended for his elder brother. And when the blind old man inquired how he had obtained venison so quickly, he had the hardihood to answer: "Because the Lord thy God brought it to me." While he served Laban, we are told he artfully managed to have all the strong cattle of such a colour as Laban had promised to him for wages; but, in conversation with his wives, he devoutly ascribed it all to God: "If your father said, The speckled shall be thy wages, then all the cattle bare speckled. If he said, The ring-straked shall be thy hire, then all the cattle bare ring-straked. Thus God hath taken away the cattle of your father and given them to me." Josephus informs us that "Jacob was envied and admired for his virtuous sons." But we find eight of them conspiring to murder their younger brother, and dissuaded from their cruel purpose only by the suggestion of one of them to sell him into slavery. Reuben was guilty of dishonourable conduct with his father's concubine. Judah ordered his son's widow to be put to death for incontinence, and was induced to recall the sentence only because she proved to him that he was himself the



father of her child. Shechem, the son of a neighbouring chieftain, in a sudden fit of amorous passion, took Jacob's daughter to himself without asking the consent of relatives, or offering the customary purchase-money. He afterward sought to atone for his too violent love, by offering marriage, and whatever dowry her friends required. Her brothers replied that such a marriage would be impossible, unless he and all his tribe consented to be circumcised, according to the custom of the Hebrews. The ardent young chieftain agreed to these hard terms; but when they had been fully complied with, Jacob's sons slew him and all his people, seized all their possessions, and carried their wives and little ones into captivity.

The sale of Joseph by his brethren was the first circumstance that brought the posterity of Israel into close connection with Egypt. By his skill in the interpretation of dreams, Joseph rose high in favour with one of the Pharaohs, who named him Psathom Phanec, which signifies the revealer of secrets, and subsequently invited his relatives to reside in a district of his kingdom. How far he assumed the customs of his adopted country, we are not informed. That he did so in some degree, is implied by the fact that he married an Egyptian wife of high rank, daughter of Poti-pherah, priest of On, which Greeks called Heliopolis. That he practised the magical rites then in vogue, is shown by his describing the cup found in Benjamin's sack, as "the cup whereby he divined." When he died, his body was embalmed and buried by Egyptians; but it was afterward carried to the land of Canaan, according to a promise he had required of his brethren. Josephus says the posterity of Jacob remained in Egypt four hundred years. They dwelt apart, in a district assigned to them, because "shepherds were an abomination unto the Egyptians." But though they were a separate people, with a foreign language, the opinions and customs of others gradually mingled with their own, in the course of centuries.

Hebrew Sacred Books inform us that the Egyptians, in process of time, became jealous of the rapid increase of

Hebrews, and therefore ordered their male children to be put to death. Josephus gives an additional reason. He says: "One of the sacred scribes among the Egyptians, who were very sagacious in truly foretelling future events, told the king that about this time a child would be born to the Israelites, who, if he were reared, would bring the Egyptian dominion low, and would raise the Israelites." This prediction so alarmed the monarch, that he ordered all their new-born sons to be drowned. Amram, grandson of Levi, was informed in a dream that a babe about to be born to him was the remarkable child predicted by the Egyptian prophet. When the boy came into the world, he was thrown into the river, according to the royal command; but he was carefully enclosed in a strongly woven basket, and his sister watched it as it floated down the stream. When the daughter of Pharaoh went with her attendants to bathe in the Nile, she saw the basket, and caused it to be brought to her. Struck with the uncommon beauty of the infant, she at once adopted him, and sent for a nurse. The babe naturally turned away from the breast of a stranger, and his sister Miriam made this a pretext for calling his own mother to nurse him. Pharaoh ratified his daughter's adoption, notwithstanding the alarm which Josephus says he felt concerning the prophecy. They bestowed on the foundling the name of Moses, from Egyptian words, signifying saved from the waters. This is supposed to have happened about one thousand six hundred years before our era.

Two sets of influences acted on the child thus rescued, and produced a character which has strongly marked itself on the history of the world. He was born a Hebrew, and his people, as herdsmen and labourers, belonged to a caste despised by the upper classes of Egypt. He was nursed by his own mother, and would naturally keep up a subsequent connection with his relatives. Under such circumstances, he could scarcely fail to hear the prophecies and exploits of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, told with all the exaggerating pride of family and clan,

which to this day marks the traditions of nomadic tribes. That sympathy for his people was kept wide awake within him, is manifest by the fact that at forty years old he slew an Egyptian because he saw him beating a Hebrew. But while the posterity of his ancestors were in the condition of ignorant slaves, he himself received the best instruction the world then afforded. Writers of his own nation thought they awarded him the highest intellectual praise when they declared "he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." From all sources there is concurrent testimony that Egypt was universally considered the fountain-head of wisdom and science. Knowledge was shut up from the common people, and monopolized by the priesthood, which included the royal family within itself. Moses, as the adopted son of the king, who was always inducted into the sacerdotal ranks before his inauguration, must necessarily have been educated by priests, and of course familiar with the secret doctrines taught at the solemnization of their Great Mysteries. From fitful gleams of light, which history throws on the subject, there is reason to suppose these Mysteries inculcated a belief in One Invisible God, whose attributes were merely symbolized by the numerous popular deities. Similar ideas would be instilled by his mother and Hebrew relatives, when they repeated Abraham's abhorrence of images, and traditionary prophecies that his descendants were destined to become a mighty nation under the especial guidance of the "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Thus trained in sympathy with his people, and educated far above their level, he was peculiarly prepared to be their leader; an office which he is supposed to have undertaken when he was about eighty years of age.

The only light we have concerning the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, is imparted by Hebrew Sacred Books and fragments of Manetho, an ancient historian of Egypt, as quoted by Josephus. The book of Exodus informs us that Pharaoh became jealous of their increasing numbers, lest in case of war they should join with his

enemies. This was a very natural fear, considering how much Egypt had suffered from the irruption of a Shepherd race from the East, and their consequent dread of wandering and predatory tribes; but it produced a policy so oppressive toward the Hebrews, that God commanded Moses to bring them out thence, and take possession of the promised land of Canaan; and when they went out, "a mixed multitude went with them."

Manetho, as quoted by Josephus, states that the provinces of Egypt rose against the Shepherd race, who had subjugated them. A long war ensued, which ended in the expulsion of the Shepherds. They were permitted "to depart from Egypt with all their families and effects, in number not less than two hundred and forty thousand, and bent their way through the desert toward Syria. But as they stood in fear of the Assyrians, who then had dominion over Asia, they built a city in that country which is now called Judea, of sufficient size to contain this multitude of men, and named it Jerusalem." Some suppose the name of Palestine to be derived from Pali-stan, the Land of the Pali, which means of Shepherds. Manetho goes on to say: "The king Amenophis was desirous of beholding the gods, as Orus, one of his predecessors in the kingdom, had seen them; and he communicated his desire to a priest, who seemed to partake of the divine nature, both in his wisdom and knowledge of futurity. He told the king that it was in his power to behold the gods, if he would cleanse the whole country of lepers, and other unclean persons that abounded in it. Well pleased with this information, the king gathered together out of Egypt all that laboured under any defect in body, to the amount of eighty thousand, and sent them to the quarries, which are situated on the east side of the Nile, that they might work in them, and be separated from the rest of the Egyptians. Among them were some learned priests, who were affected with leprosy. The prophet, fearing the vengeance of the gods would fall both on himself and the king, if it should appear that violence had been offered to these priests,



added, also in a prophetic spirit, that certain people would come to the assistance of these unclean persons, and would subdue Egypt, and hold it in possession thirteen years. He dared not communicate these tidings to the king, but left in writing what would come to pass, and then destroyed himself, at which the king was fearfully distressed. When those sent to work in the quarries had continued some time in that miserable state, the king was petitioned to set apart for their habitation and protection the city of Avaris, which had been left vacant by the Shepherds; and he granted their desire. But when they had taken possession of the city, and found it well adapted for a revolt, they appointed for themselves a ruler from among the priests of Heliopolis, one whose name was Osarsiph, and they bound themselves by oath that they would be obedient to him. Osarsiph, in the first place, enacted a law that they should neither worship the gods, nor abstain from those sacred animals which Egyptians held in veneration, but sacrifice and slay any of them; and that they should connect themselves with none but such as were of their own confederacy. When he had made such laws as these, and many others of a tendency directly in opposition to the customs of the Egyptians, he gave orders that they should employ the multitude of hands in rebuilding the walls about the city, and hold themselves in readiness for war with Amenophis the king. He then took into his counsels some others of the priests and unclean persons, and sent ambassadors to Jerusalem, to those Shepherds who had been expelled by king Tethmosis. He informed them of the position of affairs, and requested them to come up unanimously to his assistance in this war with Egypt. He promised to provide a plentiful maintenance for their host, and reinstate them in their ancient city Avaris, assuring them that he could easily reduce the country and bring it under their dominion. The Shepherds received this message with great joy, and quickly mustered to the number of two hundred thousand men, and came up to Avaris." The king of Egypt retreated

into Ethiopia, fearing the vengeance of the gods if he attacked the lepers, on account of the sacredness of the priests, who were among them. "When these people from Jerusalem had come down, with the unclean of the Egyptians, they treated the inhabitants with such barbarity, that those who witnessed their impieties believed their joint sway was more execrable than that which the Shepherds had formerly exercised alone. For they not only set fire to the cities and villages, but committed every kind of sacrilege, destroyed the images of the gods, and roasted and fed upon those sacred animals that were worshipped; and having compelled the priests and prophets to kill and sacrifice them, they cast them naked out of the country. It is said that the priest who ordained their polity and laws was by birth of Heliopolis, and his name Osarsiph, from Osiris, the god of Heliopolis; but when he went over to these people his name was changed, and he was called Moses. After this, Amenophis and Rampses his son came with a great force, and encountering the Shepherds and the unclean people, they defeated them, and slew multitudes, and pursued them to the bounds of Syria." Such is the Egyptian version of the story, and Josephus quotes it to prove that his ancestors were descended from the Shepherd kings.

Whether Moses ever was an Egyptian priest, it is now impossible to ascertain. But it seems likely that the Israelites departed from Egypt about thirty years after Cecrops left the same country, to found the city of Athens. A man called Moses bound them together by laws, which gave a new impress to their character, and strongly influenced the whole of their future destiny. These laws are in many respects obvious copies of what he had learned in Egypt; but he infused some elevated ideas, greatly in advance of his time; ideas which dawned upon his soul by the same divine influence which in all ages and all nations has guided every human being who has been enabled to help the world forward even one single step in its slow progress. All surrounding nations had adopted some of

the subordinate Spirits for their especial guardians, while priests, or philosophers, taught among themselves the secret doctrine of One Invisible God. Moses declared to the Hebrews that the One Supreme God was *their* tutelary deity; their peculiar guardian and friend, and the sworn enemy of all *their* enemies. He was wiser and stronger than any of the gods who protected other nations; however powerful those deities might be, he ruled over them all; and therefore the people whom he had chosen for his own would rule over other nations, if they obeyed him. He himself chose their ancestor Abraham to be the founder of a great nation. He himself had spoken to the Patriarchs with his own voice, and guided them in every step of their wanderings; he had appeared to them visibly, and in dreams, and had pledged his word that their posterity should possess the land of Canaan. Again and again Moses repeated: "Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God. The Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth." In the name of the Lord he prophesied: "Thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt rule over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee." Such were the doctrines and promises which fired the zeal and concentrated the energies of the Hebrews, and at the same time produced an exaggerated estimate of their own importance.

But though one undivided object of worship was presented, instead of a multitude of deities, the ritual prescribed by Moses bore very strong resemblance to the Egyptian models, with which his mind had been long familiar. When the people inquired the name of the great God who had chosen them, he told them it was Jehovah; a word which contains the present, past, and future tenses of the Hebrew verb to be; and therefore signifies I am, was, and will be. On a very ancient temple in Egypt has been found the inscription, "I am whatever is, was, and will be." Hebrews had such reverence for the name of Jehovah, that it was never uttered except by the High

Priest; and when the people heard it, they all fell prostrate to the ground. They never wrote it, but expressed it in their Sacred Books by a short mark, which they pronounced Adonai, meaning the Lord. The names of Egyptian deities were never written in the popular language of the country; they were always expressed by symbols; and even in their sacred language the names of some divinities were always written in one way, and pronounced in another. Hindoos had similar scruples concerning the name of Brahm.

Judges in Egypt, who were always priests, wore a breastplate ornamented with jewels, containing the images of two deities, Thmè, goddess of Truth or Justice, and Rà, god of the Sun, signifying Light, or Manifestation. The Urei, or Asps, were emblems of royalty in Egypt, and often affixed, in hieroglyphics, to the disc of the sun, because he was the king of planets. Moses ordained that Hebrew High Priests should wear a breastplate set with precious stones, and that the Urim and Thummim should be placed therein. There has been much controversy among commentators concerning the Urim and Thummim. The sun in Hebrew is Aur; plural, Aurim. Truth is Thmè; plural, Thmim. When learned Jews translated their Sacred Scriptures into Greek, they translated Urim and Thummim into Greek words signifying Manifestation and Truth. Philo, a learned Jew, informs us that the breastplate of their High Priest contained "images of the two Virtues, or Powers."

The portable temple, which Moses made in the form of a tent, and called the Tabernacle, was constructed on the same principles as Egyptian temples. It faced the east; it had a tank of water for ablution; it had an outer enclosure, another within, called the Sanctuary, or Holy, and another inmost, called Sanctum Sanctorum, or Holy of Holies; veiled from the congregation by a gorgeous curtain of blue, purple, and scarlet. In the inmost sanctuary of Egyptian temples was a chest or shrine, surmounted by a sacred image, overshadowed by creatures with wings.



In the Sanctum Sanctorum of the Tabernacle was a chest, or ark, plated with gold, and overshadowed by the wings of cherubim, touching each other. There has been much discussion concerning these cherubim. Josephus says they were "flying animals, like to none which are seen by men, but such as Moses saw figured in the throne of God." Ezekiel, alluding to these emblems, describes the same face in one place as the face of an ox, and in another as the face of a cherub. The word cherub in Hebrew means to plough. It is now the general opinion of scholars that the Hebrew cherubim were creatures resembling the winged bulls, so common as sacred emblems in Chaldea and Egypt. The Hebrew Ark had rings, through which poles were slipped, that it might be carried on the shoulders of priests. In many of the religious processions sculptured in ancient Egyptian temples, priests are represented carrying their sacred shrine in the same manner.

Kings and priests in Egypt were anointed with sacred oil. Moses prepared fragrant oil, consecrated it, and laid it up in the Tabernacle to anoint the Hebrew priests. In Egypt, the High Priesthood descended in the same family; it was the same with the Hebrews. In Egypt, portions of land were set apart for the sacerdotal order, and the same provision was made for Hebrew priests. In both countries, the priests wore pure white linen, and performed many ablutions. In both countries, the government was a theocracy; everything being decided by oracles delivered to priests in the temple.

Egyptians welcomed the New Moon with religious ceremonies; so did the Hebrews. They had harvest festivals, during which they offered the first sheaves of their grain to Isis; Hebrews did the same in the service of Jehovah. Sculptures in Egypt, made long before the time of Moses, represent priests offering cakes, meal, wine, turtledoves, and young pigeons, to their gods; and precisely these oblations to Jehovah are prescribed by the Hebrew Law. Hindoos and Egyptians had an idea that the fumes of animal sacrifices were acceptable to the deities, and in some

sort necessary to them. In the Laws of Moses, burnt-offerings of animals are continually called "a sweet savour unto the Lord." Hindoos and Egyptians believed fragrance was peculiarly agreeable to divine beings; and Hebrews were commanded to wave incense before the Lord.

Egyptian priests, with solemn ceremonies, laid the sins of the nation on the head of a bullock, sacrificed the victim, and removed far from them the head, on which the sins were supposed to rest. Moses ordained that the sins of the priesthood should be laid on the head of a bullock, to be afterward sacrificed; and the sins of the people to be laid on the head of a goat, who was afterward thrown over a precipice, that he might carry the sins off with him. Both Hindoos and Egyptians attached peculiar sacredness to cows. The ashes of cow-dung, prepared with solemn ceremonies, is prescribed in the Vedas to be mixed with water as an appropriate purification to keep away the Spirits of Death. Moses commanded the children of Israel to burn a red heifer, "skin, flesh, blood, and dung." The ashes thus obtained was gathered up, and kept for purposes of purification. The priest mixed it with water, and sprinkled it with a bunch of hyssop upon whoever had touched a human bone, or a grave, or a dead body, or had entered a tent where a corpse was lying.

From time immemorial it has been the custom for travelling parties in Hindostan to take with them a pole with the image of a serpent wreathed round it. Serpents of brass and serpents of silver abounded in Egyptian temples, and were mysteriously connected with their ideas of the healing art. From them Greeks learned to attach similar medical importance to the serpent; and the emblem of their Æsculapius, god of medicine, was a serpent wreathed round a pole. Hebrew Sacred Books tell us that Moses made a serpent of brass and put it upon a pole; "and it came to pass that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived."

Egyptians had great abhorrence of swine, and considered the flesh unclean above all other food. Priests purified themselves with religious ceremonies if they touched the beast, even accidentally; for it was the common belief that Evil Spirits were peculiarly prone to take up their abode in them. Moses said to the children of Israel: "The flesh of swine shall ye not eat, and their carcass shall ye not touch; they are unclean to you." If they happened to touch one, they went through ceremonies of purification before they ventured to approach any sacred place.

Why Moses was not circumcised, being a descendant of Abraham, and adopted by Egyptians in infancy, is not explained; but the fact is implied by his saying to the Lord: "Behold I am of uncircumcised lips; how then shall Pharaoh hearken unto me?" The question plainly indicates that the rite was deemed of importance by the Egyptians. While Moses dwelt with Jethro, priest of Midian, he seems to have neglected the circumcision of his son. But when he was about to return to Egypt, the rite was performed, though Zipporah, his wife, appeared averse to the custom.

Hindoos and Egyptians, being ignorant of the fact that rain is caused by continued exhalations from the earth and ocean, supposed that there was a great reservoir of waters above the sky. That Hebrews entertained the same idea, is shown by their statement that when Jehovah created the world, "he divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament."

Many more points of resemblance would doubtless become obvious, if Egyptian records had come down to us as fully as the Hebrew. But Moses took some very important steps in advance of the country where he was educated. The descendants of his ancestor Levi were ordained a line of hereditary priests; and the family of his brother Aaron was instituted a perpetual order of High Priests. But with this exception, he did not divide the people into castes. Egyptian priests kept the higher por-

tions of their religion as mysteries carefully concealed from the populace. But the religion taught by Moses was equally open to all classes. In the name of the Lord, he announced to all the Hebrews: "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation." When one ran and told him that two men were prophesying in the camp, he nobly replied: "Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that *all* the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them." Some of the Levites took advantage of this equalizing doctrine, and said to Moses and Aaron: "Ye take too much upon you, seeing *all* the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them." Nevertheless, a line of separation was, to some extent, established between the initiated few and the rude tribes they governed. Moses and Aaron, and all the succeeding series of High Priests, are represented as in possession of some means of direct communication with Heaven, unknown to the common people, and carefully preserved from them.

The greatest step in advance was the idea of God as an Invisible Being, never to be represented by any image or symbol. There is much reason to suppose that enlightened Egyptians also believed in One All Including Being, from whom Amun and the other deities emanated. But their Supreme Cause was probably a mere abstraction, like the Hindoo Brahm, and the Persian Zeruâné Akeréné. And even that metaphysical idea was known to the priests only, while the multitude were left to worship cats and dogs, bulls and crocodiles. Moses, on the contrary, represented the One Invisible God as living in the midst of the people, sustaining, protecting, rewarding, and punishing them. In most contemporary nations, the division of the gods into masculine and feminine, had led to many gross ideas and licentious practices in religious ceremonies. There were no traces of such in the teachings of the Hebrew law-giver; and the consequence was a much higher and purer worship than belonged to any of the surrounding nations. But their ideas of God were not sufficiently elevated for



them, to imagine him above *all* human passions. Anger, jealousy, and revenge, are perpetually imputed to him. Of a Hebrew who offered any homage to the gods of other nations, it was said: "The Lord will not spare him; but the anger of the Lord, and his jealousy, shall smoke against that man." And God said: "If thou afflict any widow, or fatherless child, my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword." It was common, in describing offenders, to say: "The Lord rooted them out in anger, and wrath, and great indignation." Sometimes he is represented as changeable of purpose, repenting of the evil he had done, or intended to do. When the golden calf was made, the Lord said unto Moses: "Behold it is a stiff-necked people; now, therefore, let me alone that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them. And Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt? Wherefore should the Egyptians say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it forever. And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people." When the children of Israel murmured in the wilderness, "the Lord said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them. And Moses said unto the Lord, Then the Egyptians shall hear of it, and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that thou Lord art among this people, that thou art seen face to face, that thou goest before them by day in a pillar of cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. Now if thou shalt kill all this people, then the nations which have heard of thee will say, Because the Lord was not able to

bring this people into the land which he swore unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness. I beseech thee pardon the iniquity of this people, according unto the greatness of thy mercy. And the Lord said, I have pardoned, according to thy word." The commands and actions attributed to God constantly manifest the same tendency to judge of the Supreme Being as if he were like unto themselves. He is represented as commanding them to "buy bondmen and bondwomen of the heathen round about. They shall be your bondmen forever. And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall be surely punished. Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished; for he is his money."

"Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling."

"Of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth. Thou shalt utterly destroy them."

"If a man cause a blemish in his neighbour, as he hath done so shall it be done unto him. He that killeth a man, he shall be put death. Breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe; as he hath done, so shall it be done unto him again."

While the children of Israel were dwelling in the vicinity of Moabites, they were invited to attend some of the festivals of the gods of Moab. They consented, "and did eat, and bowed down to their gods." "And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel; and he said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people and hang them up before the Lord against the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel."

Concerning those who were drawn toward other modes of worship than the Hebrew, the Lord commanded: "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy

daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods; thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him. But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die."

While the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the Sabbath day. "And the Lord said unto Moses, The man shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died."

The remarkable familiarity with God which characterized patriarchal times, is likewise conspicuous in the history of Moses. Hebrew Scriptures declare that "the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." On one occasion, Moses and Aaron, and seventy of the elders of Israel, went up unto the Lord. "And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand; also they saw God, and did eat and drink." On another occasion, Moses said unto the Lord: "I beseech thee show me thy glory. And the Lord said, Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me and live. Behold there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock, and I will cover thee with my hand as I pass by; and I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts; but my face shall not be seen."

Among all ancient nations, mountains were venerated, partly owing to the awful majesty they imparted to scenery, and partly from a conviction that the higher the earth ascended, the nearer it approached the residence of

divine beings, and the more certainty was there that they would hear the invocations and prayers of mortals. Hence we find anchorites and prophets of all lands had the custom of ascending mountains, in order to receive spiritual communications. Moses went up Mount Sinai and remained forty days in the midst of its awful solitudes, to inquire of God what laws he should give the Israelites; and the people were told to tarry for him in the valley below. During this interview, as related in Hebrew Sacred Books, he received ten commandments graven on stone. "And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God." Not only the moral precepts and the civil code, but all the ceremonies, and minutest practical details, rules for weaving cloth, for trimming the hair and beard, the length and breadth of the Ark, fringes on the priests' garments, the number of branches on the golden candlestick, and the number of knobs on each branch, were all prescribed by God, in familiar conversation with Moses. When envy was excited because Moses held the office of Lawgiver, and his brother Aaron that of High Priest, the Lord gave Moses special directions how to act in this emergency. He commanded that the chief of each of the twelve tribes should bring a branch of almond tree to Moses, who was instructed to write every man's name on his branch, and deposit them all in the Tabernacle. And the Lord promised to show the people whom he had chosen for the priest, by causing his branch to blossom during the night. Accordingly, in the morning, the branch which Aaron had brought for the tribe of Levi was covered with buds, blossoms, and fruit; and by this miracle the family of Aaron became an hereditary priesthood during the national existence of the Hebrews.

In some cases, the divine commands are represented of a contradictory character; as when God commanded the Israelites to borrow ear-rings and other jewels of the Egyptians, and carry them away, though He had previously commanded them not to steal.



On one important occasion, the Hebrew lawgiver acted upon the suggestion of Jethro, his father-in-law, and no mention is made that either of them took counsel of God. Jethro, seeing Moses wearied with settling the innumerable cases brought before him from morning till night, advised him to choose elders from among the people to settle minor questions. Moses acted upon his suggestion, and appointed seventy elders, called the Sanhedrim.

Trial by ordeal was prescribed in the law of Moses, as it was in the Hindoo, and other ancient codes. If a man was jealous of his wife and wished to test her innocence, it was ordained that he should bring her to the priest, who took "holy water in an earthen vessel, and put into the water dust from the floor of the Tabernacle." He then administered an oath to the woman, and solemnly pronounced curses upon her, if she said she was guiltless, and swore falsely. He wrote the curses and blotted them out with the water, and then gave it to the accused to drink. "And the Lord said to Moses, When he hath made her drink the water, then it shall come to pass that if she have done trespass against her husband, the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her and become bitter, and her belly shall swell, and her thigh shall rot; and the woman shall be a curse among her people."

One passage in the Mosaic dispensation appears like a recognition of human sacrifices. It is as follows: "No devoted thing, that a man shall devote unto the Lord of all that he hath, both of man and beast, and of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed. Every devoted thing is most holy unto the Lord. None devoted, which shall be devoted of men, shall be redeemed: but shall surely be put to death." Jephthah burnt his daughter as a sacrifice to the Lord; but there is no record that Moses sanctioned such a practice, or that it prevailed among the Hebrews at any period; unless the slaughter commanded by Moses, as atonement for worshipping the golden calf, be considered as a human sacrifice. He ordered the sons of Levi to "put every man his sword by

his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses; and there fell of the people about three thousand men. For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to-day to the Lord, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day." The first-born of all cattle were set apart to be sacrificed to the Lord; but the first-born of human beings were redeemed by consecrating an equal number of men to the religious services of the Tabernacle. This substitution was the origin of the order of Levites. Moses counted the whole tribe of Levi, and then counted all the first-born of the Israelites, from a month old and upward. The first-born of the people exceeded the tribe of Levi, by two hundred and seventy-three; and these were redeemed by paying five shekels each to the priests. The same sum continued ever after to be paid for all first-born children. All the tribe of Levi were consecrated to the service of God; and this was considered in the light of an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole people. But as they were not put to death, and as it was supposed God required blood for atonement, two bullocks were sacrificed in their stead. The Levites laid their hands upon the heads of these victims, that the sins, which the whole nation laid upon the tribe of Levi, might be transferred to the beasts, whose blood was shed as an expiation. God said to Moses: "The life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul."

In the writings ascribed to Moses, nothing is said concerning the immortality of the soul, nor is there any record by which his opinions on that subject could be ascertained. The rewards promised to the Israelites, and the punishments threatened, are altogether of a temporal nature. It is declared that "God will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth gen-

eration." "If thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and do all his commandments, the Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground. The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways. Thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail. But if thou wilt not hearken unto the Lord thy God, to observe and do all his commandments and statutes, cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. The Lord will smite thee with consumption, and fever, and inflammation, and extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and mildew. And the Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thy enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them. The Lord will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, with the emerods, with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed. The Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart. Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this Law, them will the Lord bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed. As the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you, so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to naught."

That the policy of Moses was illiberal toward foreigners, is to be attributed to the circumstances in which he was placed. He appears to have been a wise and far-sighted man, greatly in advance of the age in which he lived; but he had to deal with ignorant and barbarous tribes, incapable of appreciating his motives, or understanding the high destiny marked out for them. All the energies of his great soul were employed to form them into a distinct nation, and raise their religious ideas above the worship

of images. To promote these objects, it was necessary to forbid marriage with other nations and tribes, to inculcate detestation of their worship, to discourage commerce, to avoid foreign literature and the arts, with all of which the worship of images was intimately connected. In preserving themselves a distinct and peculiar people, the Hebrews necessarily became narrow and exclusive. In all their regulations, there was a marked distinction between themselves and foreigners. At the end of every seven years, all debts due from one Hebrew to another were released; but debts due from a foreigner might be exacted. If a Hebrew became very poor, he might sell himself, and one of his own nation might buy him for a term of years; "not as a bondservant, but as an hired servant." At the end of every seven years he might go out free, if he wished, and the master was enjoined to supply him liberally with grain, wine, and flocks. The Lord said to Moses: "They shall not be sold as bondmen. Both thy bondmen and thy bondmaids shall be of the heathen that are round about you. Of the children of the strangers shall ye buy. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bondmen forever. But over your brethren the children of Israel ye shall not rule with rigour." Though it was not allowable for one Hebrew to sell another to a person of any other nation, a poor Hebrew might sell himself as a servant to a rich sojourner, who dwelt in the midst of them; but he had the privilege of being redeemed at any time, either by himself or his relatives. There were gleams of a kindly spirit even toward foreigners. Moses ordained: "If a stranger dwelleth with you in your land, ye shall not vex him. He shall be unto you as one born among you; and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." In all that related to their own internal policy, great liberality is manifested. All the regulations tended to promote equal distribution, moderate abundance, respect for domestic institutions, and unstinted kindness to the poor.



If a man had built a new house and not dedicated it, or planted a vineyard and not eaten of it, or married a wife and not taken her home, he was not required to go forth with the tribes to battle, lest he should die without a taste of his promised happiness. To prevent the land from passing into the hands of strangers, or becoming accumulated in large estates belonging to a few of the wealthy, there was a great Jubilee appointed every seven times seven years. If any Hebrew had sold his estate, and been unable to redeem it, the land was returned to him, or his heirs, at the Jubilee. All Hebrews who were sold as servants, either to their own people, or to sojourners, became free at that joyful festival. The Lord said: "Thou shalt hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land, and unto all the inhabitants thereof. Ye shall return every man unto his possessions, and unto his family." "The land shall not be sold for ever; for the land is mine, saith the Lord." "Thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field, when thou reapest the harvest of thy land, neither shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest. If thou hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it. Thou shalt leave them unto the poor and the stranger. When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow." In addition to these benevolent provisions for every year, a portion of the proceeds of every man's land was set apart for the poor every third year. Six "Cities of Refuge" were provided, where he who had killed a man might remain in safety, till the matter was fairly investigated by established tribunals. The purity of women was carefully guarded from such customs as contaminated the worship of many neighbouring countries. For these humane and equalizing regulations, for teaching the same religion to priests and people, and for holding up the doctrine of one Supreme

Being, in the midst of most discouraging obstacles, our gratitude and reverence are due to Moses. Deservedly he stands conspicuous among the agents, whom God has chosen in all ages, and from all nations, to bring the world gradually out of darkness into light.

After the death of Moses, Joshua led the people over Jordan, and conquered many of the tribes of Canaan. He taught the Israelites, as his predecessor had done, that they were the chosen agents of Jehovah, to exterminate idolaters and take possession of their lands. But tribes, who had cities and vineyards thus violently wrested from them by foreign invaders, naturally viewed the subject in another light. Procopius, a Greek historian, native of Cæsarea, in Palestine, supposed to have died six hundred and fifty years after our era, speaking of a nation in Libya, says: "They were the Gergesites, Gebusites, and other nations, who were driven out of Palestine, by Joshua the son of Nave." [Nun.] He testifies that he himself saw the following sentence, engraved in Phœnician characters, near a fountain in Libya: "We are they who fled from the face of Joshua the robber, the son of Nave." The author of Ecclesiasticus calls Joshua the "son of Nave," that being a change in the name by Jews who spoke Greek.

When Grecians represented their deities as conniving at falsehood, and assisting to break solemn treaties, their perfidy was sanctified to popular imagination, by its being always done in favour of the Greeks, who believed themselves especial favourites of the gods. In a similar spirit, Hebrews represented Jehovah as commanding his chosen people to steal from the Egyptians, and to kill by thousands, men, women, and infants, from whom they had received no injury; and when the bloody work was accomplished, they devoutly thanked the Lord, because he had given them "vineyards they had not planted, and harvests they had not sowed."

Hebrew Sacred Books declare that Joshua was "full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon

him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the Lord commanded Moses." He also is said to have acted under the immediate and perpetual guidance of Deity. "After the death of Moses, it came to pass that Jehovah spake unto Joshua."

Concerning the rite of circumcision, we are told that "the Lord said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives and circumcise the children of Israel the second time. And this is the cause why Joshua did circumcise. All the people that came out of Egypt were circumcised, and they had all died in the wilderness by the way; but all those that were born in the wilderness they had not circumcised." The fact that Egyptians considered all uncircumcised men unclean, is implied in the record of this transaction; for after the rite had been performed on all the Hebrews, "the Lord said to Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you."

The directions Joshua received from God are characterized by the same austerity as those to Moses. He was commanded to exterminate the Canaanites; "to destroy them utterly, and leave nothing to breathe." When one of the Hebrew soldiers concealed under his tent some gold and silver taken from images or temples, among the spoils of war, "the Lord commanded Joshua to burn him, and all that he had, with fire. So Joshua, and all Israel with him, took him, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tents, and all that he had, and all Israel stoned them with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones."

The Tabernacle had been carried with the Israelites in all their wanderings through the wilderness. Wherever it rested, there they pitched their tents; and whenever it moved, though in the middle of the night, they rose and followed it. This prompt obedience originated in their belief that it was God's house, where he actually dwelt; and that He himself went before them as a guide, in the form of a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night.

Joshua brought the Tabernacle into the land of Canaan. Seven years it remained at Gilgal, guarded by a strong force, while the Israelites encamped there. When they went to battle, the Ark was taken out of it and carried before them, that the Lord might be always present with them, ready to be consulted in case of difficult emergencies. When Israel had more quiet possession of the land of Canaan, the Tabernacle was removed to Shiloh, and enclosed within walls. At Mount Ebal, Joshua built an altar of whole stones, and wrote on the stones a copy of the Law of Moses, and "read all the words before all the congregation of Israel, with the women and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them. And they offered upon the altar burnt-offerings, and sacrifices, and peace-offerings, to the Lord God of Israel."

The Hebrews, and "the mixed multitude" who, according to their Sacred Records, came up with them from Egypt, were so imbued with the customs of that country, that even Aaron consented to make a golden calf for them to worship, and himself erected an altar before it. Notwithstanding the severe edicts of Moses, and the efforts of Joshua to impress them on the minds of the people, they manifested in Canaan the same proneness to idolatry. Joshua found it necessary to assemble the tribes and earnestly remind them of the temporal blessings they had received from their tutelary God: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I brought your fathers out of Egypt. And I brought you into the land of the Amorites. And I sent the hornet before you, which drove them out before you, even the two kings of the Amorites; but not with thy sword, nor with thy bow. And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwelt in them; of vineyards and olive yards, which ye planted not, do ye eat." And Joshua said: "Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods, which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, [the river Euphrates] and in Egypt. But if it seem evil to you to serve the



Lord, choose ye this day whom ye will serve; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. And the people answered, The Lord our God brought our fathers out of the land of Egypt, and drove out from before us all the people, even the Amorites, which dwelt in the land; therefore will we serve the Lord. And Joshua said to the people, He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. If ye forsake him and serve strange gods, he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good. Now therefore put away the strange gods that are among you, and incline your heart to the God of Israel. And the people said, We will serve the Lord our God, and his voice will we obey. And Joshua made a covenant with the people, and set them a statute and an ordinance, and wrote the words in the book of the Law of God, and took a great stone and set it up there under an oak, that was by the sanctuary of the Lord. And he said, This stone hath heard all the words of the Lord, which he spake unto us; it shall therefore be a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God."

Hebrew records declare that the very next generation of "the children of Israel forsook the Lord God of their fathers, and served Baal and Ashtaroth." The first is supposed to have been the Chaldean representative of the Sun, and the other the Syrian representative either of the Moon, or of the planet Venus. Wild and troubled times followed the death of Joshua. Israelites intermarried with neighbouring tribes, and "forgot the Lord their God, and served Baalim and the groves. Therefore the anger of the Lord waxed hot against Israel." The king of Mesopotamia conquered them, and they served him eight years before they were delivered out of his hand. Forty years after, the king of Moab conquered them, and they served him eighteen years. He was finally murdered by one of the tribe of Benjamin, and the Israelites had rest for eighty years. After that, they were conquered by the king of Canaan. At that period, Hebrews were governed by

judges; and it is a very remarkable feature in such unsettled times that "Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, judged Israel." By pursuing her advice the king of Canaan was conquered, and "the land had rest forty years." Then the Midianites conquered Israel and kept them in subjection seven years, so that they were compelled to "hide in dens in the mountains." In their distress, they cried unto the Lord, and a prophet named Gideon rose up to remind them of the God who brought their fathers out of Egypt. "The Lord said unto Gideon, Throw down the altar of Baal, which thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it; and build an altar unto the Lord thy God, and take thy father's young bullock and offer a burnt-sacrifice with the wood of the grove, which thou shalt cut down." Gideon obeyed the command; but so popular were the foreign gods, that he did it in the night-time, not daring to do it by day. When the men of the city discovered who had done it, they insisted he should be put to death; but his father ward off the present danger, and Gideon afterward secured the affections of the people by fighting successfully against the Midianites. He requested the men of Israel to bring him all the golden ear-rings they took with the spoils of war, and they willingly gave them, "beside ornaments, and collars, and purple raiment, that was on the kings of Midian, and chains that were about their camels' necks. And Gideon made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city." There is no explanation concerning the use made of this ephod, but the natural supposition would be that it was consulted as an oracle. That it came in some way to be regarded as an idol, is implied by the remark that "all Israel went thither a whoring after it; which thing became a snare unto Gideon and his house."

"As soon as Gideon was dead, the children of Israel turned again, and went a whoring after Baalim, and made Baal-berith their God." When the Ammonites conquered them, "and vexed and oppressed them eighteen years," they began again to cry unto the Lord. But "the Lord

said, Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen. Let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation. And the children of Israel said, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim. And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the Lord; and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel." Jephthah, "a mighty man of valour," was raised up to rescue his countrymen from the Ammonites. He ruled over Israel six years, as judge and general. In his history occurs the only instance of human sacrifice recorded in the Hebrew Sacred Writings. Before he went forth to battle, he made a vow that if he were victorious, he would sacrifice to God, as a burnt-offering, whatever should first come forth from his house to meet him on his return. His daughter, his only child, came out to welcome him, and "he did with her according to his vow." This circumstance is told in the Book of Judges, without any expressions of disapprobation.

During the times of Joshua and the Judges, the visits of angels are still described as common occurrences. "It came to pass when Joshua was near Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold a man was standing beside him with his sword drawn in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said, Art thou for us, or for our foes? And he said, Neither; for I am come as the prince of Jehovah's host. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did homage to him, and said, What would my Lord say to his servant? And the prince of Jehovah's host said to Joshua, Loose the shoe from thy foot, for the place thou standest upon is holy." An angel, who came up from Gilgal to admonish the nation, speaks as if he were Jehovah himself, saying: "I made you go out of Egypt." An angel of the Lord came and sat under an oak, and talked with Gideon while he was threshing wheat. Gideon prepared food for him, and was told to spread it on the rock. When the angel touched it with his staff, fire came out of the rock and consumed the food, and the angel vanished. Such visits appear to have been regarded as omens of

death; for Gideon was alarmed, and said: "Alas, because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face!" And the Lord said to him: "Fear not; thou shalt not die." An angel appeared to the wife of Manoah and predicted the birth of Samson. She described him to her husband as "a man of God, whose countenance was like an angel of God, very terrible." Afterward he appeared to her again, and she ran to call her husband, who offered him food; "for he knew not that he was an angel of the Lord." The mysterious visitor refused to eat, or tell his name; but commanded that the kid prepared for food should be burnt on the rock, as a sacrifice to the Lord; and when the flame rose, the angel ascended in it. Manoah and his wife fell on their faces to the ground, and said: "We shall surely die, because we have seen God."

A regular, established priesthood was incompatible with such unsettled times. Men consecrated their own priests, who were sometimes of the tribe of Levi, sometimes of other tribes. It is to be presumed that the people received little instruction in the Laws of Moses, for it is obvious enough that they were perpetually infringed, without meeting the punishment he affixed to such offences. It is recorded that a man of Mount Ephraim, whose name was Micah, took eleven hundred shekels of silver from his mother, and afterward restored them, confessing the theft. "And his mother took two hundred shekels of the silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image; and they were in the house of Micah. And Micah had an house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest. "And a young man of the family of Judah, who was a Levite, came to the house of Micah and sojourned there. And Micah said, Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten shekels of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals. And the Levite was content to dwell with the man, and Micah consecrated the Levite, and he became his priest." He was probably called a Levite merely be-



cause he was acquainted with the prescribed Levitical ritual; for he is said to have been of the tribe of Judah. That it was considered fortunate to obtain possession of such a private chaplain, is implied by Micah's remark: "Now I know the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest." Yet Moses would have "stoned him with stones till he died;" for he was priest to "a graven image and a molten image."

At that time the tribe of Dan were looking about to seize land wherever it best suited them to dwell. Hebrew Sacred Books tell us that when their messengers came to Laish, they found that the inhabitants thereof dwelt quiet and secure, had no commerce with other men, were too far from the Sidonians to be protected by them, and had no magistrate in the land to put strangers to shame for anything they might do. These were deemed suitable reasons for seizing on their possessions for the tribe of Dan. Accordingly, when the pioneers went back and gave information concerning the state of things, their brethren mustered six hundred men, with weapons of war, and went to attack Laish. Their ancestors had slaughtered men, women, and children, because Moses and Joshua told them it was the divine command that they should utterly exterminate idolaters. But these warriors were impelled by no such zeal in the service of one invisible God. For when they came to Mount Ephraim, and passed the house of Micah, the messenger, who had previously been sent to spy out the land, said: "Do ye know there is in these houses an ephod, and teraphim, and a graven image, and a molten image? And they came in thither and took the graven image, and the molten image, the ephod, and the teraphim. Then said the priest unto them, What do ye? And they said, Hold thy peace; lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us. Is it better for thee to be a priest unto one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel? And the priest's heart was glad; and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the

people. When they were a good way from the house, Micah and his neighbours overtook them. And Micah said, Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest and ye are gone away; and what have I more? And the children of Dan said unto him, Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows run upon thee, and thou lose thy life, with the lives of thy household. And when Micah saw they were too strong for him, he turned and went back to his house. And the children of Dan went their way, and came unto Laish, unto a people that were quiet and secure, and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt their city with fire. And they called the city Dan, after the name of their father, who was born unto Israel. And they set up Micah's graven image, and Jonathan and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan." The people publicly resorted thither, to worship and consult the teraphim of Micah, until the tribes of Israel were carried away captive.

We are told that, in the days of the Judges, "every man did that which was right in his own eyes;" and some of their recorded transactions certainly prove a very savage state of society. There is a story related in Hebrew Sacred Books, concerning a young Levite, who was bringing home his concubine from his father's house in Bethlehem-Judah. In the course of their journey, they came among the Benjamites, who had not sufficient hospitality to offer them a shelter for the night. An old man of Mount Ephraim, seeing them in the street, invited them to his house. In the course of the night, some Benjamites came and beat at the door, and made indecent demands concerning the traveller. Frightened by their violence, he at last agreed to let them have his concubine. The poor woman died in the hands of the brutal multitude, and in the morning her corpse was found at the door. Her husband cut her in pieces, and sent a fragment to each of the tribes of Israel, calling upon them to revenge the wickedness done by some of the Benjamites. In obedience to this summons, the tribes came up to battle against

Benjamin; but they were defeated, with twenty-two thousand slain. Phineas, the priest, a descendant of Aaron, stood before the Ark of the Covenant, where oracles were received from God. There "he asked counsel of the Lord, saying, Shall we again go up to battle against the children of Benjamin our brother? And the Lord said, Go up against them." Accordingly, they went forth the second day, and were defeated, with eighteen thousand slain. The priest again inquired at the Ark whether the children of Israel should go to battle against Benjamin. And the Lord answered, "Go up against him." They attacked the Benjamites a third time, and destroyed twenty-five thousand and a hundred of them. The sequel of the story implies that the women of Benjamin, though not implicated in the offence, were slaughtered almost to extermination. "The men of Israel had sworn in Mizpeh, saying, There shall not any of us give his daughter unto Benjamin to wife." But after the Benjamites were nearly destroyed, "the people wept sore, saying, O Lord God of Israel, why has this come to pass, that there should be one tribe lacking in Israel? They repented them for Benjamin their brother, and said, How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing we have sworn by the Lord that we will not give them of our daughters for wives?" In this dilemma they concluded to send twelve thousand valiant men to attack Jabesh Gilead, and destroy all the men, and all the married women. They did so, and brought away captive four hundred maidens, and gave them to the Benjamites for wives. But the number did not suffice them. And "the elders of the congregation said, How shall we do for wives for them that remain? There must be an inheritance for them, that a tribe be not destroyed out of Israel. Howbeit, we may not give them wives of our daughters; for the children of Israel have sworn, saying, Cursed be he that giveth a wife to Benjamin." The people of Shiloh annually observed a festival, and came forth with songs and dances in honour of some deity; and it happened that the time for this festival was

near at hand. The elders of Israel advised the Benjamite widowers to wait for this opportunity, and hide themselves in the vineyards, in order to catch the young women as they came out to dance. "And the children of Benjamin did so, and took them wives of them that danced, whom they caught."

In such unsettled and marauding times, the priesthood could not have been in a very flourishing condition. The only mention made of them is in connection with Eli; and his children are described as "sons of Belial, who knew not the Lord." "It was the priests' custom with the people, that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a flesh-hook of three teeth in his hand; and he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, and all that the flesh-hook brought up the priest took to himself." But when any of the Israelites went up to Shiloh to sacrifice, the sons of Eli, who were priests by hereditary right, sent their servant to say: "Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw." And if the sacrificer asked him to wait till the fat was first burned on the altar, a sacrifice to the Lord, he answered: "Nay, thou shalt give it to me now; if not, I will take it by force." Such conduct made the people abhor to offer sacrifices to the Lord; and their aversion to the young priests was increased by the charge brought against them, that "they lay with the women who assembled at the door of the Tabernacle."

Hebrews, in common with most nations of antiquity, had the custom of dedicating their children to the service of a Deity, by vows made in some peculiar emergency. Hannah, the wife of Elkanah, was exceedingly grieved because she had no children. She went up to Shiloh to worship, and wept before the Lord, saying: "If thou wilt give unto thine handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life." She afterward gave birth to Samuel. As soon as he was weaned, his parents took him up to the house of the Lord, in Shiloh,



and offered three bullocks, and an ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine; and they left the little boy with Eli the priest, saying: "As long as he liveth, he shall be lent to the Lord." "And the child was girded with a linen ephod, and ministered before the Lord. Moreover, his mother made him a little coat, and brought it from year to year, when she came up with her husband, to offer the yearly sacrifice." Hebrew Sacred Writings declare that God chose him, and appointed him to an especial mission, even in his childhood. One evening, when he lay down to sleep, he heard a voice calling him; and he rose and went to Eli, saying: "Here I am; for thou didst call me." The aged priest made answer: "I called thee not, my son. Lie down again." And "the Lord called yet again. And Samuel went to Eli and said, Here am I. And he answered, I called thee not, my son. Lie down again. The Lord called Samuel the third time. Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed to him. And he went to Eli and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child." He told him to lie down, and when he again heard the voice, to answer: "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." He did so; and the Lord informed him that he would visit the family of Eli with heavy judgments, "because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not."

As Samuel grew to manhood, he spoke boldly against the evil practices he witnessed, and became famous, as "a prophet to whom the Lord had revealed himself." At that time, the Israelites renewed their attacks on the Philistines. No reason is assigned for it; but it probably arose from their abiding conviction that they had a divine right to take possession of their neighbour's land, on account of the promise made to Abraham. According to custom, the army took with them the Ark of the Covenant, that the presence of God might ensure to them the victory. But the event proved disastrous. A messenger came to Eli and told him that Israel fled before the Philistines, that his

two sons were slaughtered, and the Ark of God was taken. At these tidings the old priest fell down and died; and the wife of one of his sons gave premature birth to a boy, whom, with her dying breath, she named Ichabod, which signifies departed glory. "The glory is departed from Israel," said she; "for the Ark of God is taken."

It was the universal opinion of ancient nations that tempests, famine, pestilence, and all other remarkable afflictions, were owing to the anger of some deity, on account of his neglected worship. The Ark of the Hebrews remained seven months with the Philistines, and they kept it in a temple which they had built to a god called Dagon. In the course of these seven months, their land was unusually infested by mice, and a troublesome disease, called the emerods, prevailed extensively. It was suggested among them that the God of the Hebrews sent these plagues, because the Ark, in which he dwelt, had been taken away from the people whom he protected, and he was thus deprived of his accustomed worship. Their priests and divines, being consulted, advised them to put the Ark of the Hebrews into a new cart, drawn by two young cows, which had never worn a yoke; and to make five golden images of mice, and five golden images of the emerods, one for each of their five cities, and put them in a box beside the Ark, as a trespass-offering to the god of the Hebrews, whom they had, probably offended. They were further instructed to send the cows away without a guide; and if they of their own accord took the road to Beth-Shemish, then they should know for a certainty that the pestilence had been sent upon them by the Hebrew god. When the cows were fastened to the cart, they went straight to Beth-Shemish, whose name signified the House of the Sun, probably on account of some temple to the Sun erected there. It was one of the cities apportioned to priests of the tribe of Judah, after the conquest of Canaan. The men of Beth-Shemish were reaping wheat when the cart containing the Ark stopped in a field near them, and stood by a great stone. They were rejoiced at the sight, and Levites

went and took the Ark, and the box containing the golden images, and laid them on the great stone. And the men of Beth-Shemish cut up the wood of the cart, and with it burnt the two young cows, as an offering to the Lord. Some of the men of the place had the curiosity to peep into the Ark. It is not stated whether they were Israelites who did this; but the record declares that the Lord punished their curiosity by the death of more than fifty thousand men. When the people saw that the Lord had smitten them with such great slaughter, they became afraid of the Ark, and sent to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, begging them to come and take it away. So it was carried thither, "to the house of Abinadab in the hill; and it is said, "the men of Kirjath-jearim sanctified Eleazar, son of Abinadab, to keep the ark." For twenty years it remained thus obscurely in the hands of a private family.

The more pious among the Israelites felt deeply humiliated under the conviction that the presence of Jehova was withdrawn from them on account of their sins. They sought counsel from Samuel, in whom they found a second Moses. The office of Judge was conferred upon him, and he ruled Israel for twelve years. He earnestly repeated, what had so often been impressed upon the Hebrew mind, that Jehovah was a jealous God, and if they would propitiate him, they must put all other gods entirely away. Under the influence of Samuel, the children of Israel again resolved "to put away Baal and Ashtaroth, and serve the Lord only." They gathered together unto Samuel, and poured out a libation of water before the Lord, and Samuel prayed for them. It is supposed that he first established seminaries, called Schools of the Prophets, where young men of all the tribes were instructed in the Law of Moses, in the history of their own nation, in medicine, music, and sacred poetry. The course of teaching did not embrace general information, but was entirely confined to subjects connected with the Hebrew religion.

In Samuel's old age, the people became discontented, on account of the corruption of his sons. They demanded to

have a king, and he anointed Saul to rule over them. More than four hundred years before that time, the tribe of Amalek had laid wait for the children of Israel as they came up out of Egypt, and fought with them. Samuel said to Saul: "The Lord sent me to anoint thee king over his people Israel. Now, therefore, hearken unto the voice of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." Saul accordingly went up against the Amalekites and destroyed them; but he was induced to save Agag their king, and the best of the sheep and oxen. Samuel was exceedingly offended that his orders had not been literally obeyed. When Saul humbly acknowledged his error, and pleaded in excuse that the people wished to spare the fattest of the sheep and oxen, to sacrifice to the Lord their God, he sternly answered: "To obey is better than sacrifice." Then he ordered Agag to be brought, "and he hewed him in pieces before the Lord." Samuel afterward consented to appear at a public sacrifice with Saul; but thenceforth there was coolness between the powerful prophet and the king whom he had anointed. It is recorded that "the word of the Lord came to Samuel, saying, It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king." Soon after the Lord told him to fill a horn with oil, and go to Bethlehem, and secretly anoint David the son of Jesse to be king. David had his own armed band of followers, and became an object of great jealousy to Saul. Nob was then the chief town of the priests, where religious ceremonies were daily performed by descendants of Eli, though the Ark still remained at Kirjath-jearim. David and some of his followers came to Nob, and being hungry, asked the priests for bread. They replied that they had none, except the sacred show-bread, which was dedicated to the Lord. But when David represented that his necessities were very pressing, they gave him five loaves



of the holy bread, and armed him with the sword of Goliah, which had probably been kept in some sacred place as a trophy. When Saul heard of this, he sent soldiers to Nob, who slew eighty-five priests, and all the men, women, children, oxen, and sheep.

In the second year after David became king, he went with thirty thousand chosen men to bring the Ark of the Covenant from Kirjath-jearim, and place it in a new Tabernacle on Mount Zion. The Laws of Moses expressly required that the Ark should always be carried on staves, slipped through rings, and borne on the shoulders of Levites. But on this occasion, it was placed in a new cart drawn by oxen, after the fashion of surrounding nations, who were accustomed thus to carry images of their gods, and other sacred symbols. David and all the people went in procession before the Ark, dancing and playing on a variety of musical instruments. When they came near Mount Zion, the oxen jostled the Ark, and Uzzah, a Levite, put forth his hand to steady it. Now, by the Laws of Moses, a Levite was not allowed to see the Ark unveiled, much less to touch it. "And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah, and God smote him there for his error; and he died there by the Ark of God." This sudden disaster excited such consternation, that David did not dare to have the Ark brought into Jerusalem. It was accordingly "carried aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite." When it had remained there three months, it was told king David that the Lord had blessed the house of Obed-Edom, because of the Ark. These tidings removed his fears, and again he went forth with a great multitude, and brought it to Mount Zion with songs and dances, and the sound of trumpets. The king himself danced before it, having taken off his royal robes, and girded himself with the linen ephod of a priest.

With David's reign commenced a new and important era in the history of the Hebrews. In the time of Abraham, there was a city called Salem, said to have been governed by a king named Melchisedec. David found it in the posses-

sion of the Jebusites. Perceiving that its situation was well adapted for a central point of union to all the tribes of Israel, he conquered it and fortified it, and named it Jeru-Salem, from Hebrew words signifying He shall see Peace. When the new city was well established, he opened commerce with his neighbours the Tyrians, a much more wealthy and cultivated people than the Hebrews. The character of the laws given by Moses, and the subsequent wandering and predatory habits of the tribes, had been extremely unfavourable to the cultivation of the sciences, or the arts. Architecture was in the rudest state among Hebrews, but the Tyrians were skilful workmen. Therefore, when David "grew great," and wished to build himself a palace, he was obliged to send to the king of Tyre for cedar-trees, carpenters, and masons.

While the Israelites themselves dwelt in tents, they had made a tent-temple for the Ark of God. But now, when the king had built a royal house for himself, it seemed to him that the Deity he worshipped ought not to dwell less honourably. He said to Nathan the Prophet: "See now I dwell in an house of cedar, but the Ark of God dwelleth within curtains." Nathan at first encouraged his idea of building a temple, but in the night the Lord revealed to the prophet that it was his will to have the temple built by a son of David, whose posterity he promised should be forever established on the throne. In one place, Hebrew records declare that David could not find time to build a temple, on account of "the wars that beset him on every side;" in another place, it is said the Lord forbade him to do it, "because he had shed so much blood upon the earth." He was successful above all the leaders of his nation. He took rich spoils in war, and kings who sought his alliance rewarded his powerful assistance with treasures more splendid than had ever been seen in Israel. He consecrated a large portion of these to religious uses, as thank-offerings to Jehovah for his great prosperity. So that at his death there was a large supply of gold and silver, marble and cedar, in readiness for the temple. In the

mean time, he introduced great improvements into the public worship. Trumpets were the only instruments prescribed by Moses; but David, who was himself a skilful player on the harp, introduced into the service of the Tabernacle trained bands of singers and musicians, who performed on harps, psalteries, cymbals, and an instrument with small tinkling bells. He encouraged the cultivation of sacred poetry, and himself composed religious songs, which breathed devout aspirations in some of the sublimest language of lyric poetry.

This illustrious monarch, the object of so much pride and reverence to Hebrews, is called in their Sacred Writings, "a man after God's own heart." The ideas men formed of God at that period are therefore indicated by the prominent points of his character. He was a man of great energy and powerful passions; fierce and revengeful toward his enemies, but endowed with susceptibility of feeling, which made it natural for him to weep over a fallen foe. He was constitutionally ardent, with the devout tendency which usually belongs to such temperaments; hence he rushed into sins, and then "humbled himself before the Lord," with repentance as earnest as his crime. The generosity of his character, and the strong attachment he inspired, are implied by the following anecdote related of him: During one of his severe campaigns among the Philistines, being sorely afflicted with thirst, he expressed a longing for some water from the well of Bethlehem, his native town. Three of his followers, who heard the wish, forced their way through the enemy's host, at peril of their lives, and brought the water he so much desired. Touched by this proof of their affection, he refused to drink it. Famishing as he was, he poured it out a libation before Jehovah, saying, Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this. Is not this the blood of the men who went in jeopardy of their lives?" By his wise policy he cemented the tribes together in strong bonds of union. His success flattered their pride; and his constant habit of attributing all good fortune to Jehovah, greatly strengthened their re-

liance on that powerful God, who had chosen them for his especial favourites. The reverential tendencies of the royal Psalmist are abundantly indicated by his forbearing to kill Saul when he was in his power, because he was "the Lord's anointed," by the tone of his grand old temple-songs, by his careful observance of religious ceremonies, and by the frequency with which he sought counsel of God, through the agency of oracles and prophets. But his devout aspirations and pious resolutions were far above his practice. He prayed like a saint, and poured forth sublime poetry like an inspired prophet, and he did so sincerely and earnestly; yet in many things he acted like an ambitious politician, and a ferocious man of blood. During the conflict between his followers and the adherents of Saul, Jonathan, the beloved friend of David, and son of Saul, had a child of five years old who was lamed in both his feet; for his nurse let him fall when she was fleeing from the horrors of civil war. It was not till the royal house of Saul were entirely subdued, and David had nothing further to fear from them, that he inquired whether any of the descendants were left, to whom he could "show kindness for Jonathan's sake." The lame, disinherited boy had by that time grown to manhood, and become a father. He was proffered a seat at the royal table all the days of his life, and received back the estate which belonged to his grandfather. After the war occasioned by Absalom's rebellion, there was famine in the land. This might very naturally arise from neglect of crops during civil commotions; but David, according to the prevailing ideas of his time, believed it to be the direct vengeance of God, in punishment for some sin. Accordingly, he inquired of the Lord what was the cause of the famine. And the Lord answered: "It is for Saul and his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites." It seems the Israelites had sworn not to molest the Gibeonites; but Saul, for some unmentioned reason, had slain a number of them. He had been thirty years in his grave, when David was informed that the Lord was punishing all the



people for his old transgressions. He went to the Gibeonites and asked what atonement would satisfy them. They refused to take gold or silver as a ransom for their slaughtered brethren, and demanded seven of Saul's descendants, that they might "hang them up unto the Lord;" in other words, offer them as a human sacrifice. David spared the descendants of Jonathan, on account of an oath he had sworn to his early friend. But he gave up two of Saul's sons by a concubine, and five sons of Michal, Saul's daughter. "And the Gibeonites hanged them on the hill, before the Lord." Michal had loved David in his days of comparative obscurity, and had been the first wife of his youth. Afterward, when there was civil war between Saul and David, her father gave her in marriage to another man, by whom she had these five sons. When David became king, he demanded her again, though he then had two other wives. Perhaps he thought his regal power would be more securely established, as the acknowledged son-in-law of Saul. Michal's second husband seems to have loved her tenderly, for when she was carried away from him, "he followed her weeping," until the king's messengers ordered him to turn back. From what is recorded, she and David do not appear to have lived on good terms after this forced reunion. Still worse was his conduct to one of his generals, named Uriah. Having accidentally seen his beautiful wife, while she was bathing, he fell in love with her, and caused her to be brought to his palace, while Uriah was absent fighting his battles. When she afterward informed him that she was likely to be a mother, he sought to shield himself from disgrace, by bringing Uriah home. Failing in that attempt, he caused him to be slain, and afterward married the beautiful widow. His acts of cruelty were not always of a kind to be excused as hasty impulses of a zealous temperament. A fierce spirit of retaliation often marked his conduct and his writings, and in some cases it seems to have been cherished by him for years. When he conquered the Moabites, he caused the inhabitants of all their cities to be executed by various

modes of torture, described as "putting them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and passing them through the brick-kiln." On his death-bed, when he was a very old man, he charged his successor not to let the hoary head of Joab go down to the grave in peace. Joab had brought odium on David's administration by some unauthorized acts of military zeal against the house of Saul; he had likewise slain Absalom, the beautiful son of David, in the days of his rebellion. At that time, Shimei, who belonged to the same tribe as Saul, cursed David, and expressed his gratification that one of his own sons had risen against him, as he had formerly risen against Saul, his benefactor. Shimei afterward humbly asked forgiveness, and David solemnly promised, before all the people, that he would do him no injury. But ten years after, when he was dying, he charged Solomon to "bring down the hoary head of Shimei to the grave with blood;" saying that he himself could not do it, because he had sworn to him by the Lord that he would not put him to death. Yet Hebrew Sacred Records, after recounting all these things, declare David did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and turned not aside from anything he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite."

Solomon fulfilled the sanguinary injunctions of his dying father, and likewise put to death a brother, whose priority of birth gave him a claim to the throne. These transactions do not seem to have made him too much "a man of blood" to be a fitting instrument in building the projected temple. In the fourth year of his reign he began this great work, on which an army of labourers are said to have been employed. He numbered the foreigners in Israel, who were probably made bondmen by conquest. Hebrew Sacred Records inform us that eighty thousand of these were employed to hew and work stone, and seventy thousand to bear burdens, under the control of three thousand six hundred overseers. Thirty thousand Israelites cut timber in Lebanon, by courses; ten thousand in

each month, while the others rested. The ornamental work was done by skilful artificers from Tyre. Notwithstanding the number of workmen, it was seven years before the temple was completed. The wrought stones were so fitted to their places before they were brought to Jerusalem, that they were put together without noise. Hebrews had a tradition that they were not hewn or smoothed by any instrument, but a worm called Samir was created by God on purpose to do that business; and the stones, thus miraculously prepared, moved to the temple of their own accord, where angels laid them in their places.

A mass of buildings for the priests, and various other religious purposes, was enclosed within a wall. In the centre, and overlooking them all, was the famous temple. It had an outer court surrounded by a wall, and an inner court separated from the outer by colonnades with brazen gates. Sacrifices and prayers were offered in the inner court, which contained a brazen altar for burnt-offerings, and an immense tank, or basin of brass, supported on the backs of twelve brazen oxen. This was for the convenience of the priests, who were required to perform ablutions before they entered the temple. A pipe supplied it with water from a well, and it contained enough for two thousand baths. There were likewise ten large lavers of brass, supported on small pillars, and engraved with likenesses of bulls, lions, and eagles. These were for washing portions of the animals offered in sacrifice.

The temple was an oblong building of white stone. According to the dimensions given, it must have been about the size of a small European cathedral. On three sides were corridors rising above each other to the height of three stories, supported by stately pillars, and containing apartments in which sacred utensils and treasures were kept. The fourth and front side was open, with a portico at the entrance supported by two brazen pillars, highly ornamented with representations of palm trees, lilies, and pomegranates. The body of the temple, separated and veiled from the porch, was called the sanctuary, or holy

place. The doors were carved with cherubim, palm trees, and flowers, gilded, and covered with an embroidered curtain. The walls were carved with the same figures, laid in gold, and in some places adorned with precious stones. Here stood an altar of gilded Arabian wood, used solely to sustain a golden dish, in which frankincense burned perpetually. It was a Hebrew tradition that fragrance diffused from this table might be smelled from Jerusalem to Jericho. The great number of animals slaughtered, and the blood poured out and sprinkled in multifarious religious ceremonies, would probably have been disagreeable without this precaution. On a golden table was laid an offering to the Lord of twelve loaves of bread, one from each tribe. These were renewed every Sabbath, and the old loaves divided among the priests. Ten branching candlesticks of gold sustained golden lamps, filled with pure olive oil, not pressed out in a mill, but such as exuded, drop by drop, from bruised olives, and was thus perfectly free from sediment. They were kept burning day and night, the sanctuary not being lighted by any other means.

Within the sanctuary was a secret apartment, called the *sanctum sanctorum*, or holy of holies. The floor was of cedar overlaid with gold. The ceiling was covered with plates of gold fastened with golden nails. The walls were of polished marble lined with cedar, carved with cherubim, palm trees, and flowers, richly gilded. The door, carved and gilded after the same patterns, was separated from the sanctuary by chains of gold, and an embroidered curtain of blue, purple, and crimson. In the inmost recesses of this holy place, Solomon put two gigantic images of cherubim, fifteen feet high, of gilded olive wood. Their outer wings touched the wall on either side, and the inner wings met together. Immediately under their wings was placed the Ark of the Covenant, whose golden cover was called the Mercy Seat, because God there showed himself propitious, after being appeased by the blood of sacrifices. Golden images of cherubim were on the Mercy Seat, one



on either end, bending toward each other, and forming with their outstretched wings a kind of seat, called the Throne of God. Over it was a visible cloud, called the Shechinah, or Divine Presence, in which Jehovah was supposed to be actually present. Hence he is often spoken of, in the Hebrew Sacred Books, as "dwelling between the cherubim." The Ark was the same one constructed by Moses, from money, ear-rings, and other jewels, which the people dedicated for that purpose. All other things connected with the temple were made anew by Solomon, according to patterns prescribed by Moses, though greatly exceeding them in splendour. The colossal cherubim placed on each side of the Ark, and the representations of bulls, lions, and eagles, seem like an infringement of the command that no graven images should be made. They were probably additions suggested to Solomon by his intercourse with Tyrians and Egyptians.

A great number of gold and silver utensils were made for the use of the temple, and these were continually increased by gifts from devotees, who expected thereby to gain favours from their God.

Before the building could be fit for worship, the altar for burnt-offerings must first be purified from pollutions it had acquired by the hands of workmen and the touch of tools. For this purpose, a bullock was sacrificed, and the priest put some of the blood on the horns of the altar with his finger. When this had been repeated seven days, the altar was ready for sacrifice, and thenceforth sanctified everything that touched it. The altars, and all the utensils, were anointed with oil made fragrant by spices; a quantity of which had always been kept in the holiest place, by command of Moses, to be used only for consecrating kings, high priests, and vessels belonging to the House of God.

When everything was duly prepared, all the tribes of Israel assembled with their elders, and, with the king at their head, went in procession to Mount Zion to bring thence the old Ark of the Covenant. When it was opened, it was found to contain only the two tables of

stone, with graven commandments, which Moses had placed therein at Horeb. Priests, sanctified for the purpose, took up the Ark, carried it to the new temple, and placed it in the holy of holies. At that moment, a hundred and twenty priests in the sanctuary sounded their silver trumpets; bands of musicians began to play, and Levites, clad in white linen, sang, "Praised be the Lord! for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever." "The trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising the Lord." While this great chorus was resounding through the temple, the Shechinah, or Divine Presence, which five hundred years before had descended over the Mercy Seat in the Tabernacle, descended in the same visible form of a cloud, and rested over the Mercy Seat in the Temple. It was probably accompanied by sudden light; for it is stated that "the glory of the Lord filled the house; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud."

When Moses offered a burnt-offering to the Lord, "fire came out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt-offering and the fat." The flame thus kindled was not allowed to go out, and no other was used for religious purposes. When two sons of Aaron burned incense before the Lord, kindled with common fire, Hebrew Sacred Writings declare that "fire came from the Lord and devoured them, and they died." Whether the sacred fire was afterward lost, in the course of their wanderings and their wars, is not stated. But when Solomon offered his first burnt offering on the new altar of the temple, we are told that fire came running out of the air, and consumed the sacrifice. And when all the children of Israel saw it, "they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground." This heavenly fire was tended night and day by priests, who fed it with perfectly clean wood, stripped of its bark, and free from all imperfections. It was deemed sacrilege to resuscitate this holy flame by blowing upon it with the breath.

"The king and all the people offered sacrifices to the Lord,

twenty-two thousand oxen, and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep; so the king and all the people dedicated the House of God. And Solomon kept the feast fourteen days, and all Israel with him." Kneeling on a high platform above the crowd, he spread out his hands and prayed: "O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like unto thee, in the heaven, nor on the earth. But will God in very deed dwell with men upon the earth? Behold heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built! But hearken unto the supplications of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, which they shall make toward this place. Hear thou from thy dwelling place, even from Heaven, and when thou hearest forgive."

It was an universal custom to choose the highest site within a city for the temple of its presiding deity. Solomon's temple stood on Mount Moriah, in the centre of Jerusalem, which was thenceforth called the Mountain of the Lord's House. According to Hebrew traditions, it was the place where Cain and Abel offered oblations, and where Abraham made ready to sacrifice Isaac. People believed the temple was actually God's house; that he had a local and personal residence in the Holy of Holies, and manifested himself in the form of a shining light. The High Priest went there to ask questions of him, and received answers, which were considered oracles. They spread a golden table with bread for Jehovah, as they would have done for a temporal king in his own palace. They supposed he enjoyed the fragrance of incense and the savour of burning sacrifices; and Jerusalem was considered pre-eminently safe, happy, and glorious, because he was supposed to be more peculiarly and permanently present there than elsewhere.

Before the temple was built, the people had always been accustomed to sacrifice in "high places." Hills that supplied the shade and solemnity of groves were preferred by the devout of all nations; and in such places altars and images were sure to abound. The extreme proneness of

the Israelites to pay homage to these foreign gods, and to consider the groves themselves holy, induced Moses to command them not to plant any trees near an altar of the Lord their God. Afterward, such localities seem to have been deemed allowable, amid the inconveniences of their unsettled condition, provided they were careful not to direct their worship toward any other object than the God of the Hebrews. But when the temple was built, the old caution against groves was renewed, and it was expressly forbidden to plant a single tree on the mountain where it stood. The entire hill was considered holy ground. Any unclean action, immodest gesture, idle talking, or laughing, was deemed sacrilegious there. If a leper, or a person who had eaten unclean food, or touched the dead, or stepped on a grave, entered the court of the temple without purification, he was driven out and severely scourged. None of the Gentile nations were allowed to pass in farther than the outer court. All who came from a foreign land, even if they were Hebrews, were obliged to go through a process of cleansing before they were allowed to enter the sacred enclosure; among these ceremonies were ablutions and cutting off the hair. Neither priests nor people were allowed to sit or lean within the precincts of the temple, however weary they might be. Only kings of the house of David were allowed to sit there.

It was contrary to the policy of the Hebrew government to multiply temples, because the constant object was to consolidate the tribes into a nation, and there was no bond of union so strong as one central place of worship, and the habit of consulting the same oracle in all cases of emergency. Those at a distance from Jerusalem built courts for prayer, generally in high solitary places, but they always prayed with faces turned toward their Holy City. If they prayed within the circuit of Jerusalem, they always turned toward the temple; if within the precincts of the temple, they always turned toward where the Ark stood. Three times a year, on the recurrence of great annual festivals, every man was required to go up to Jerusalem to



present offerings to the Lord, and tithes to the priesthood. Both piety and pride bound the Israelites strongly to this centre of national worship.

Moreover, the public services of religion were more interesting than they had been in the olden time. In schools of the prophets, poets composed songs for the temple, and music repeated them with its inspiring voice, on which the souls of devout listeners rose into high calm regions, far above the prosaic routine of external ceremonies. Solomon perfected the work his father had begun. Four thousand singers were employed in the service of the temple, to sing in courses, by turns; and twenty-four bands of musical instruments, each under the care of a presiding officer. Both men and women were employed in this service, for we are told of "damsels playing with timbrels" in religious processions, and it is recorded that Heman, a musician of the temple, had fourteen sons and three daughters, "all under the hands of their father for song in the House of the Lord." The service was hereditary, the duties and emoluments descending from father to son.

When Nathan the prophet announced to David that the Lord had appointed his son to build a temple, he likewise told him that God had sworn to establish his family on the throne forever. This promise, so flattering to the king, and to the hopes of the people, was often repeated in songs for worship, composed by the royal troop of poets and musicians. David himself alluded to it in one of his latest compositions. When the temple was completed, and Solomon dedicated it with prayer in the presence of all Israel, he publicly reminded Jehovah of the covenant he had made with his father's house. The promise, thus strongly impressed on the popular mind, had a powerful and abiding influence. Their national greatness began with David, and all their future hopes were intertwined with his family and tribe. In seasons of darkest discouragement, there always loomed above the gathering clouds bright visions of a "lion of the tribe of Judah," destined to come to their rescue. No prophecy ever had such permanent

and extensive influence on human affairs, as that promise made by Nathan to the most popular king of the Hebrews.

Yet Solomon seems to have soon forgotten the conditions on which that promise was given, viz.: that "the sons of David should take heed to their way, and walk before God as their father had done." Contrary to the Law of Moses, he married the daughter of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and took numerous wives from other foreign nations. They "turned away his heart after other gods." "He went after Ashtoreth, goddess of the Sidonians;" and on a hill before Jerusalem, he built places of worship for the god of the Moabites, and the god of the Ammonites. "Thus did he for all his strange wives, who burned incense, and sacrificed unto their gods;" and he did this, it is said, notwithstanding the Lord God of Israel appeared to him twice, and told him that he should not go after other gods.

A few fragments preserved in Sacred Books of the Hebrews are all that remain of the much-praised wisdom of Solomon. There is no contemporary history, by which we can judge how other nations regarded him. The national mind, hitherto fettered by the limitations of pastoral life, doubtless began to expand somewhat under the prosperous reigns of David and his enterprising son. The learned commentator, De Wette, says: "It may be maintained with highest probability that literary productions in Hebrew scarcely extend beyond the period of David and Solomon. Here is the first *sure* ground in the history of the language."

Solomon's reputation for wisdom did not shield him from popular dissatisfaction, which, according to the usages of those times, soon expressed itself in a prophetic form. An energetic man, named Jeroboam, had been appointed by the king to superintend certain public works. There was at that time a prophet named Ahijah, for whom the people entertained great reverence. One day, when he and Jeroboam met alone in the fields, the prophet seized hold of his garment and tore it in twelve pieces, saying: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I will rend the kingdom out

of the hand of Solomon, and give ten tribes unto thee. Because he has forsaken me, and worshipped Ashtoreth, goddess of the Sidonians." Solomon was well aware what a powerful influence prophecy had on the minds of the people, and how naturally it tended to produce its own fulfilment. Therefore, as soon as this proceeding was noised abroad, he became suspicious of Jeroboam, and sought to slay him. He saved himself by escaping to Shishak, king of Egypt, under whose protection he remained till the death of Solomon.

Rehoboam, the only son of Solomon, succeeded to his throne. His mother was of the Ammonites, and had always continued to worship the gods of her childhood. Therefore, it is not surprising that during the reign of Rehoboam "there were groves on every high hill, and images under every green tree." The people "provoked the Lord to jealousy with their sins; and Shishak, king of Egypt, came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the House of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house. He even took away all." But before that happened, the exiled Jeroboam had returned, and excited ten of the tribes to rebel against their king. Henceforth there were two kingdoms; one called Judah, whose capital was Jerusalem; the other called Israel, whose capital was Samaria. Ahijah, whose prophecy excited this revolt from the idolatrous descendants of David, did not have his hopes fulfilled by the conduct of Jeroboam. For he also "made a house of high places," and set up two golden calves for the people to worship, saying: "Behold, O Israel, thy gods, which brought thee up out of Egypt." It is mentioned as one of his great offences, that "he made priests of the lowest of the people, who were not of the sons of Levi." He likewise neglected some of the sacred days of the Hebrews, and kept the Feast of Tabernacles a month later than they did at Jerusalem. Writers belonging to the kingdom of Judah continually speak of him with great severity, as "Jeroboam, son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin." Yet, from what is recorded, it seems diffi-

cult to determine which was the greatest patron of image-worship, Jeroboam, king of Israel, or Rehoboam, king of Judah.

Of Abijam, son and successor of Rehoboam, it is briefly related that "he walked in all the sins of his father." But when his son Asa became king, a different course was pursued. He demolished all the images his fathers had made, and removed his mother from being queen, because "she had made an idol in a grove." "Asa's heart was perfect with the Lord all his days. And the silver, and gold, and vessels, which his father had dedicated, and which himself had dedicated, he brought into the House of the Lord." Yet it is said he imprisoned a prophet, "and was in a rage with him," because he reproved him for using gold and silver belonging to the temple, to sustain himself in time of war.

From the reign of Rehoboam, there was continual warfare between Judah and the revolted kingdom of Israel. The successors of Jeroboam did as he had done. They worshipped Baal and golden calves, and set up altars in groves. One of them, named Ahab, married Jezebel, a Sidonian, and built a temple for her god Baal, and surrounded it with a grove, and himself worshipped there. She persecuted the prophets of the God of Israel, so that they were obliged to hide in caves, sustained by bread and water, while four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal fed at the royal table. Among all the people, there were "only seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal, or kissed his image." In time of severe famine, Elijah the prophet went boldly to king Ahab, and demanded that the people should be gathered together at Mount Carmel, and that the prophets of Jehovah and the prophets of Baal should both be summoned, that the people might see which were true prophets. The prophets of each deity agreed to sacrifice a bullock, and he on whose altar fire came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifice, was to be considered the true god. It is said the prophets of Baal prayed to him from morning till



evening; but no fire descended on their altar. But when Elijah called on the God of Israel, fire immediately came down from heaven, and consumed the bullock, "and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when the people saw it, they fell on their faces, and said, The Lord he is God." Then Elijah commanded them to slaughter all the priests of Baal, and let none escape; and they did so. When queen Jezebel heard what had happened to her prophets, she swore by her gods that Elijah should share their fate; and he deemed it prudent to escape and hide himself.

Jehoshaphat, son of Asa, is described as the most pious and prosperous king of Judah, after the time of David. "His heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord, and he took away the high places and groves out of Judah. And the priests had the Book of the Law of the Lord with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people." However, when the power of Syria was growing dangerously strong, he combined with Ahab, king of Israel, to attack their common enemy; and afterward he married his son Jehoram to Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. The prophets did not fail to rebuke Jehoshaphat. On his way home from the wars, "a seer went out to meet him, and said, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? Nevertheless, there are good things found in thee, in that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land, and hast prepared thine heart to seek God." "And Jehoshaphat went out again through the people, and brought them back to the Lord God of their fathers."

His son Jehoram, and his grandson Ahaziah, when they succeeded to the throne, worshipped the same gods as Ahab king of Israel, with whom they were allied by marriage. They "made high places in the mountains of Judah," and commanded the people to worship there.

Meanwhile political changes were fermenting in the kingdom of Israel. Elijah received a command from the Lord to anoint Jehu king of Israel, and instruct him to

slay the reigning monarch with all his family. So Jehu headed a rebellion, "and slew Ahab, and all his great men, and his kinsfolk, and his priests, until he left none remaining; according to the saying of the Lord, which he spake unto Elijah." Ahaziah, king of Judah, who was visiting his kinsman, the king of Israel, was slain also. Jehu at first professed to be a worshipper of Baal, and ordered a great sacrifice in his honour, to which his priests throughout the kingdom were summoned. But as soon as they were assembled, he ordered every one to be slain, and tore down the temple of Baal, and burnt his image. Yet he by no means fulfilled the hopes of Elijah; for he manifested no faith in Jehovah, and publicly worshipped the golden calves of Egypt, which Jeroboam had set up.

The kingdom of the revolted ten tribes had a struggling and troubled existence. They were enfeebled by civil commotions, and by frequent wars with Syria and Judah. When the powerful Assyrians attacked them little more than three centuries after David, they found Israel an easy prey, and they carried off the inhabitants into a captivity from which they never returned.

The smaller kingdom of Judah, though they had Solomon's temple, and an established priesthood, were very unsteady in their reliance on Jehovah. Scarcely two kings in succession sustained his worship, and it was very evident that the popular mind was never really elevated to a genuine and strong belief in one invisible Deity. Prophets constantly taught that it was impossible for God's chosen people to meet with any disasters, unless as a punishment for some sin they had committed; and that the worship of foreign gods was great above all other sins. In times of prosperity, the people adored Baal and Ash-toreth, and kissed their hands to the stars. If famine or pestilence came, they ran back to the God of their fathers, and like terrified children inquired what they should do to abate their punishment. But as soon as the panic subsided, they resorted to the groves again, and the prescribed festivals in honour of Jehovah were neglected.

Joash, the son and grandson of two idolatrous kings, began his reign at seven years old, an orphan, under the tutelage of the High Priest. He manifested his zeal for Jehovah's worship, by ordering funds to be collected to repair the temple on Mount Moriah, which had then stood about one hundred and thirty years. All the dedicated gold was to be used for this purpose, a tax was likewise levied on the people, and the priests were instructed to obtain voluntary donations. Seven years passed on; the priests continually received contributions from the people, but the temple was not repaired. That the king distrusted the integrity of the priests, is implied by the fact that he forbade them to receive any more money. He ordered a box, with a hole in its lid, to be made and placed near the altar; and whatever the people chose to give, they dropped into the orifice. At stated times the royal secretary, in conjunction with the High Priest, took out the money, counted it, and hired masons and carpenters to execute necessary repairs. After the death of the Pontiff, there was a feud between the king and the priests. It is not stated whether it was because he had doubted their honesty, or because they were offended with him for taking golden vessels out of the temple, to bribe the king of Syria, when he threatened to attack Jerusalem. It is recorded that he and his companions "left the House of the Lord, and served groves and idols." The Lord sent prophets to remonstrate with them, but they would not listen. One of these messengers was stoned to death, by order of the king, who was soon after assassinated in his bed.

Amaziah, his son, "did what was right in the sight of the Lord" in the beginning of his reign; but when he returned from a victory over the Edomites, he brought with him some of their images, and "set them up to be his gods, and bowed down himself before them, and burned incense unto them."

Uzziah, his successor, "did that which was right in the sight of the Lord;" and his son Jotham was also a pious

prince, who built a gate to the temple. But Ahaz, the grandson of Uzziah, "sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree." When the Syrians defeated him in battle, he worshipped the Syrian gods, and raised altars to them in every city of Judah, and every corner of Jerusalem; giving as a reason that deities must be powerful who thus protected the people that trusted in them. Having been pleased with an altar he saw in Damascus, he caused one to be made after the same pattern, and placed in the temple at Jerusalem. He removed the twelve brazen oxen from under the great brazen tank; probably because he needed the brass to pay the king of Assyria for helping him in the wars. Finally he shut up Solomon's temple, and made images of Baal, which he caused to be worshipped. The ceremony of passing through fire, as an emblem of higher purification than water, formed a part of the worship of Baal, who is sometimes called Moloch. Some suppose that parents carried children on their shoulders through the fire; others think the priests led them through, or simply waved a child over the flame, to signify that he was consecrated to the God of the Sun. To avert some great calamity, children were sometimes consumed as burnt-offerings to Moloch. King Ahaz caused his own son to pass through the fire; but he could not have been materially harmed by the process, for he afterward succeeded his father on the throne. How completely the worship of images was mixed up with faith in Jehovah, is shown by the fact that the prophet Hosea, who lived in the reign of Ahaz, enumerates images and teraphim [household gods] among the desirable apparatus of a religious state. He prophesies sorrowful times, when "the children of Israel shall abide many days, without a king, without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without a teraphim. Afterward they shall return and seek the Lord their God."

Hezekiah, son of Ahaz, endeavoured to lead the people back to Jehovah, giving as a reason that while the temple



on Mount Moriah had been shut up, their sons had fallen by the sword, and their wives and children had been taken captive. "He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves." When he found the children of Israel burning incense to the brazen serpent Moses had made, he brake the image in pieces, calling it Nehushtan, which means a brass bauble. He opened Solomon's temple, and summoned the priests and Levites to sanctify themselves and the house, and make preparations for a great public sacrifice. The people, in obedience to royal command, brought up to the temple seventy bullocks, a hundred rams, and two hundred lambs, for a burnt-offering to the Lord. "And when the burnt-offering began, the song of the Lord began also, with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David, king of Israel. This continued till the burnt-offering was finished, when the king and all present with him bowed themselves and worshipped. And Hezekiah rejoiced that God had prepared the people; for the thing was done suddenly." After that, proclamation was made, and messengers sent to all the children of Israel, wherever they could be found, to come up to Jerusalem to keep the great feast of the Passover. The neglect into which the laws of Moses had fallen, is implied by the statement, "for they had not done it of a long time, in such sort as it was written." The people flocked to Jerusalem in great numbers, and "the king gave the congregation a thousand bullocks, and seven thousand sheep; and the princes gave one thousand bullocks, and ten thousand sheep; and a great number of priests sanctified themselves. So there was great joy, for since the time of Solomon there was not the like in Jerusalem."

Manasseh, son of Hezekiah, reversed all his father had done. "He built up again the high places, which had been broken down. He reared altars to Baal, and made groves, and worshipped the host of heaven. He observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with wizards, and set a carved image in the House of God." Afterward,

when he was in severe affliction, by reason of the Assyrian armies, he took the idol out of the temple, pulled down the altars he had built to foreign gods, and offered sacrifice and prayer to the God of Israel. But after his death, his son Amon set up the carved images again, and sacrificed to them.

Josiah, son of Amon, succeeded to the throne at eight years of age, and it is said he even then began "to seek after the God of David." In the eighteenth year of his reign, he sent orders to the High Priest to count over the sums of money which had from time to time been dedicated to the temple of the Lord, and apply the sum to necessary repairs. His messenger returned and announced that the High Priest had obeyed the royal mandate, and had likewise sent by him the Book of the Law, which he said had been found in the temple. It is a very singular fact, and one for which commentators are puzzled to account, that the pious young king seemed entirely ignorant of the existence of such a book. When it was read to him, and he learned that the worship of images was declared to be a great sin, which Jehovah was sure to punish with fierce anger, he rent his clothes with grief and terror. Hulda, a famous prophetess, then dwelt in the college at Jerusalem, and priests were sent to her, to inquire concerning the words of the book. She returned answer to the king that the Lord would surely punish the people for burning incense to other gods; his wrath was kindled against them, and would not be quenched. But she promised that he should not witness the evil, because he had humbled himself before the Lord, and rent his garments, when he heard the denunciations of the Law. Yet if the chief magistrate of the nation was ignorant of the existence of such laws against idolatry, the people surely were not likely to be better instructed than their monarch. Josiah forthwith commenced the work of atonement with great zeal. The image of the goddess Ashtoreth was brought out from Jehovah's temple, burned, stamped to powder, and strewn on the graves of those who had sacrificed to her. The

horses and chariot of the Sun, which had been placed over the entrance of the temple, were taken down and destroyed. The groves were cut down, and human bones burned on the high places, that they might be so effectually polluted, no one would dare to approach them. From every corner of his kingdom, he hunted out all the priests "who burned incense to Baal, to the Sun and the Moon, and the planets, and all the host of heaven;" and he slew them, and burned their bones on their own altars. He even carried his zeal so far as to send messengers into Samaria, to demolish the altars Jeroboam had erected. After this thorough purification of the land, he commanded all the people to keep the Passover. The record states: "Surely there was not holden such a Passover from the days of the Judges that judged Israel, nor of the kings of Judah." "Notwithstanding, the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath. And the Lord said, I will remove Judah out of my sight, as I have removed Israel."

When the son of Josiah began to reign, "he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord." Pharaoh carried him captive to Egypt, placed his brother Jehoiakim on the throne, and compelled the kingdom of Judah to pay tribute. Then Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came up against Jerusalem, carried the royal family into captivity, robbed the Lord's House of many treasures, compelled the people to pay tribute to him, and left Zedekiah, a third son of Josiah, to rule over them. Josephus states that king Jehoiakim went out of Jerusalem during the siege, and voluntarily resigned himself and all his family into the hands of the Babylonians, on condition that they would not burn the temple; "on which account, the Jews have celebrated him in all their sacred memorials, and his name has become immortal." But this is one of many instances in which Josephus states what is not to be found in the Hebrew Sacred Books.

It is recorded of king Zedekiah, that he and the chief priests, and the people, all transgressed very much concerning the worship of other gods, "and polluted the house of

the Lord, which he had hallowed in Jerusalem, and despised the words of his prophets." After a reign of eleven years, he ventured to rebel against the king of Babylon, who sent an army upon him, that slaughtered men and maidens, old and young, without mercy. The walls of Jerusalem were utterly demolished, the temple and palaces burned to the ground, and nearly all the inhabitants, who escaped the sword, were carried captive into Babylon; among these was king Zedekiah, who had his eyes put out. This memorable captivity happened four hundred and sixty-seven years after David, and five hundred and eighty-eight years before Christ.

In the course of numerous wars, civil and foreign, the temple of Solomon was repeatedly robbed of its treasures; but they were again renewed by offerings from devotees, according to their wealth and piety. Warlike weapons were thus dedicated after a victory, the same as in Grecian and Phœnician temples; for it is recorded that Jehoiada, the High Priest, armed his followers "with spears and shields, that were in the temple of the Lord." Shishak, king of Egypt, robbed the temple only thirty-five years after it was built. Asa, king of Judah, took gold and silver from it, to pay the Syrians for helping him against the rival kingdom of Israel. Joash, king of Judah, took valuable offerings from the temple and bribed the king of Syria not to attack Jerusalem. Jehoash, king of Israel, attacked Judah, and carried off all the gold, and silver, and precious vessels, he could find in the temple. Ahaz, king of Judah, took silver, gold, and brass, from the House of the Lord, to procure help from Assyria, to fight against the Syrians. Hezekiah, his successor, being unable to raise sufficient money to pay the required tribute to the king of Assyria, was obliged to strip from the doors and pillars of the temple, the plates of gold, with which he himself had overlaid them. And finally, Nebuchadnezzar despoiled it utterly.

A few of the poorer class of Hebrews, "vine-dressers and husbandmen," were left to till the soil of their conquered



country, and a mild, just man, named Gedaliah, was appointed to rule over them. Jeremiah the prophet was in favour with Nebuchadnezzar, because he had always advised submission to him, in opposition to a strong party of his own countrymen, who favoured an alliance with Egypt against Babylon. He was offered his choice either to go to Babylon, or remain in his native land. He chose to take up his abode at a city called Mispah, and Gedaliah the governor received orders to protect him, and supply him whatsoever he needed. When the Babylonian army had gone, many fugitive Israelites, who had hidden in mountains and caves, came to Gedaliah at Mispah. He told them that whoever would cultivate the land, and pay tribute to Babylon, should be protected, and have assistance in rebuilding their houses and sowing their crops. The justice and humanity of the governor rendered him generally popular; but a near relative of the exiled king being invited with others to a feast, treacherously attacked Gedaliah and his Babylonian guards, and slew them. The infant colony, alarmed lest this murder should be revenged upon them, fled into Egypt. Jeremiah prophesied against this proceeding, but the people distrusted his advice, and he followed them into exile. Thus were the last of the Israelites banished from the land of Canaan.

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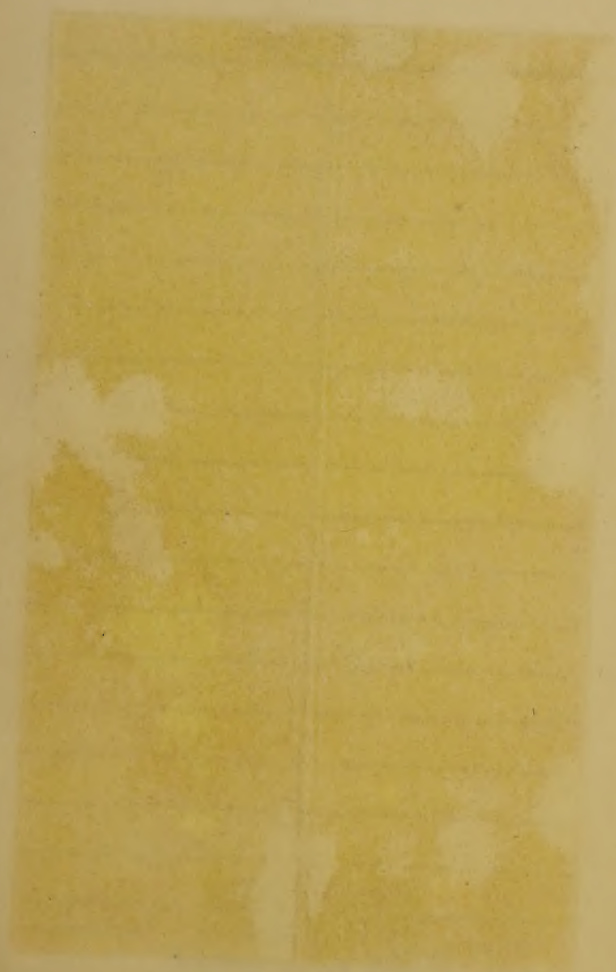
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